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LIFE OF WILBERFORCE.

THE

LIFE

OF

25593

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

BY HIS SONS,

ROBERT ISAAC WILBERFORCE, M. A.

VICAR OF EAST FARLEIGH, LATE FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE;

AND

SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, M. A.

RECTOR OF BRIGHSTONE.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. V.

Happy is the state
In which ye, father, here do dwell at ease,
Leading a life so free and fortunate
From all the tempests of these worldly seas.

SPENCER.

K X C 21

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

MDCCCXXXVIII.

25593

JOHN CHILDS AND SON, BUNGAY.

ERRATA.

VOL. V.

PAGE	LINE	
3,	15,	*for* suffered *read* supposed
121,	12,	*for* Traité *read* Traite
133,		refer note [30] to line 28
134,	18,	*for* 19th. *read* 14th.
181,	9,	*for* Mac Niel *read* Mac Neile's
220,	11,	*for* his *read* His
227,	10,	*for* "had *read* had
	12,	*for* according *read* "according
231,	29,	*for* be *read* are
237,	4,	*for* to that *read* with that
313,	16,	*for* like *read* as
316,	21,	*for* persuasive *read* persevering
319,		note [37] *for* July 29 *read* July 21
335,	28,	*for* mllions *read* millions
339,		*for* Sydney *read* Sidney

THE

LIFE OF WILBERFORCE.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OCTOBER 1818 TO JANUARY 1820.

Hayti—Aix la Chapelle—Lord Castlereagh—Mr. Clarkson—Christophe, and his Professors—Mr. Babington—The new parliament—Slave Trade, and slavery—Eulogium on Sir S. Romilly—Penal Law Reform—Diary—Sismondi—Religious anniversaries—Roman Catholic Question—Lottery—Busy life—Correspondence with his children—Lady Holland—Prince Leopold—General Boyd—Bishop of Gloucester—Slave Trade Address—Summer tour—Barham Court—Barley Wood—Blaize Castle—Wells—Malvern—Elmdon—Wood Hall—Disturbed state of the country—Manchester magistrates—Opening of session—Restrictive Bills—Diary—Opposes education not grounded on religion.

His summer rambles and the expedition to the Lakes had not withdrawn the thoughts of Mr. Wilberforce from his Haytian and West Indian clients. Before he left the neighbourhood of London he was preparing to make an effort in their favour at the approaching Congress at Aix la Chapelle; and urged Mr.

Stephen[1] "to prepare something for Lord Castlereagh's perusal while yet in this country, to which we may refer, and which may predispose him to the cause of Hayti. I cannot help hoping that the state of parliament is such, that he would not like to shock public opinion by not sympathizing with a Sovereign who is endeavouring to civilize and Christianize his people. It would be important to show that Christophe is not himself a rebel, and that the blacks were not Jacobinical revolutionists, but that they were forced into independence by the folly and wickedness of others; and by the way, Alexander's situation in relation to Poland, may dispose him to admit that a period of fifty years is sufficiently long to justify by prescription the not restoring the old order of things."

His chief hopes from the Congress rested upon Alexander's conduct. "Castlereagh will tell you," he writes again,[2] "and tell you truly, that the Congress will have nothing to do with Abolitionism in any form. But my idea is that the Emperor of Russia may be likely to come forward and befriend a proposal to make the Slave Trade piracy after the Abolition of it by Spain and Portugal; and oh that we could do something for the poor West Indian slaves through the same medium, or at least for Hayti!

"You very much misconceive my sentiments if you suppose that I do not believe that bringing our government over to our Haytian views would be an excellent service. It was rather that I despaired of it, conceiving Castlereagh to be a fish of the cold-

[1] July 23. [2] To J. Stephen Esq. Aug. 19.

blooded kind. But you have hit on the bait for him, if he be to be caught at all, by the exhibition of political consideration affecting our own interests, rather than any prospects of general philanthropy—not that he would not recognise these. Now I fear he would dislike our having any agent at Aix la Chapelle. I should be rejoiced indeed if he would suffer some one to go as his travelling depositary of tropical intelligence; but I have no notion he would, and it could not be done without his consent. It would not be at all proper for you to go, which Macaulay suggested. I fear I could not do it without impropriety. But Clarkson seems formed by Providence for the purpose." "He is the only man that could go and carry our representations who may be suffered to go of his own impulse, and not deputed by us: an affair of great importance in relation to the effect to be produced upon Castlereagh. Then he will be more acceptable than most to the Emperor Alexander, and we may depend on his being in earnest."[3] "He would be regarded as half Quaker, and may do eccentric things with less offence than you or I could. I can truly say I have no suspicion of Castlereagh. It would be most unjust to harbour any such notion after all his pains and efforts. But in his public character he might be unable without a violation of diplomatic propriety to do a thing which might be very usefully done by a nemo who should apply his lever to the great Alexander."[4]

[3] To Zachary Macaulay Esq. July 29.
[4] To James Stephen Esq. Aug. 19.

But the Emperor could not be moved by the lever of the "nemo." The Congress would do nothing for the Abolitionists; and Mr. Clarkson only gained "from Alexander an audience of an hour and a half," with an assurance "that he entirely enters into our views."[5] The refusal to acknowledge Christophe's independence produced consequences most injurious to Hayti. There was no measure which was urged more constantly by Mr. Wilberforce in all his intercourse with Christophe, than that he should reduce his army. "I fear lest his own troops should leave him; and I long to wean him from his hankering after the conquest of the Haytian republic."[6] But until his independence was acknowledged, he must maintain his troops to guard against a French invasion; and though this necessity led, as Mr. Wilberforce too truly prophesied, to his ultimate destruction, "he defended his measures in so masterly a manner, that no crowned head in Europe could send forth a letter more creditable either to the understanding or principles of its author."[7]

His own share meanwhile in these counsels was often full of perplexity. His correspondence with Christophe and his ministers was sufficiently laborious; and the general superintendence of the emigrants to Hayti, was sure to cause him disappointment and annoyance. Parties must be chosen from all ranks of life—professors for the royal college, physi-

[5] Letter from Mr. Clarkson to W. Wilberforce Esq. Oct. 11, 1818.
[6] To James Stephen Esq. Sept. 17.
[7] To Z. Macaulay Esq. July 18.

cians and divines, governesses for the royal daughters, tutors for his sons, down to ordinary teachers of a common school, and "two ploughmen and their ploughs and families." They went into a land where the whole tone of society was utterly demoralized, and vice in no degree disgraceful; and though he inquired most cautiously, scrutinized most closely, and chose at last the best who offered, numbers of these could not stand the trial. The professors quarrelled with each other; some by open vices disgraced the cause they were designed to further; some were carried off by dissoluteness and disease; whilst the few who laboured faithfully found their hands weakened in their single striving against the multitude of evil-doers, and added often, by their desponding letters, to the common burthen of this most oppressive correspondence. Still he went on with his labours cheerfully and never fainted in them, so long as the opportunity of service lasted.

Those who saw him only when he could properly allow the overflowing kindness of his heart to take its natural course, can form no idea of his firmness, when his great objects required a certain measure of severity. "Depend upon it," he says to Mr. Stephen,[8] "—— is a man of such inexhaustible and uncontrollable absurdity, that it would be highly inexpedient to connect our cause with him more than is unavoidable. I fear you will think it somewhat hard, yet considering the great interests at stake, I cannot suffer his necessities to have any weight; but

[8] July 20.

if he is in need I will gladly allow him a little sum annually, and we might send it to him anonymously every year." . Of another he says, "We must declare that his use of our name is utterly unwarrantable—he is like some vermin which will infest the most unwilling subject. It is the nature of things that the fairest trees and the finest fruits should be the prey of reptiles and grubs." [9]

When his family party had broken up at Rydale, he had been compelled to travel in a different direction from the rest; and on the 24th of October he wrote to Mrs. Wilberforce from Cambridge—"I thank God I am arrived at this place in safety, making up near 350 miles which I have travelled, full 100 of them at night, without a single accident. How grateful ought I to be for this protecting providence of a gracious God! And I just now recollect in a most natural connexion, that to-morrow, the 25th of October, is the anniversary of the day on which I experienced that notable escape from being drowned in the Avon,[10] when we lodged at Bath Easton. Praise the Lord, O my soul. I forget the year; do tell it me if you remember, by a mother's calendar. I have received your welcome letter, telling me of your being to leave Rydale yesterday, and go to Yoxall Lodge. The time stole upon me, and I find that I must now direct to you at the haunt of so many of my happy days in my bachelor's state.

"Sunday. Lest I should not be able to write in the evening, I take up my pen now, (three-quarters past

[9] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Sept. 7. [10] Vol. iii. p. 132.

two,) though I shall to-day write but little, having had very little time to myself this morning before church. My heart would be very sad, but for the blessed prospects that are opened to the eye of faith—even the faith of an unworthy sinner. I hope it will be the effect of these earthly sufferings to wean me from this world, and fix my affections and desires more on that better state, where sorrow and sighing will have fled away. However I will not open any chapter of grievances this day, and I am ready to burn what I have written, on account of its being in any other strain than that of thankfulness. Oh what cause for gratitude have I: no man surely so great, at least very few! My spirits are not in themselves so cheerful as they used to be, but it is one of my many mercies that they are so good as they are. I suppose the mental sky of every one has its 'dim passing cloud that just tempers the ray.' Stephen comes here to-day. Dear fellow; his kindness, like that of the Dean, is as lively as if it were ever so short an effort, and as persevering as if it were ever so parsimoniously exerted. No man could ever have more cause for thankfulness to the Giver of all good for the many kind friends He has vouchsafed me. Farewell. Commending you to the best blessings of God,

I am ever yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. I am vexed at having forgotten to make a little present[11] to our landlady. Do think of something and send it in my name."

[11] "The day he left Rydale," says a friend who was one of his party,

A week later he rejoined his family at Yoxall Lodge, and soon set off homewards. His next halt was Rothley Temple, whence he writes word to Mr. Hey, "I am very soon returning to the House of Commons, but in low spirits from having lost the support of several like-minded coadjutors, and more especially of the dear friend under whose roof I am now writing. The Almighty, however, can carry on his purposes by His own instruments; and when I see in every part of this country new proofs presenting themselves of the diffusion of true religion, and of its blessed effects in promoting a spirit of active beneficence and warm sympathy for the instruction of ignorance, and above all the promotion of Christian knowledge, my spirits rise again, and I am ready to hope that new and unknown public men will come forward to occupy the place of those whom we have lost. May our successors be tenfold more assiduous and more successful than we have been."

On the 24th of December he was again at Kensington, surrounded by his scattered family; and the new year opens with some striking resolutions of devoted service, in his usual tone of deep humility. "It is with a heavy heart that I look forward to the meeting; so many friends absent, and so many objects of pursuit, and I so unequal to them; yet had I duly used my powers I could do much. O Lord, do Thou quicken and guide me. I have resolved to dine out scarcely at all during this season. Health is a

" his love to every one, and his desire to do them good, was shown in his allotting some little present to each, as 'little tokens of my affection to speak for me whilst I am away.' His affection for his children and his parting blessing after family prayers were peculiarly touching."

fair plea, and justly so at my period of constitution and life, and I shall get more time at command; my memory is certainly become very bad, but by expedients, (Feinagle's, &c.) I doubt not, I could in a great degree supply the deficiency. I must make sure of what is really important. But above all, may I grow in love, and serve and glorify more my God and Saviour."

"Jan. 15th. What is it to have our views spiritual when we are in our closets, unless we also retain and carry about with us the sense of invisible things, and the desire to please our unseen, but present Saviour, looking up to Him for grace and strength! O Lord, enable me thus to live, and may I practise self-examination more constantly, that I may watch myself in this important particular."[12]

The state of the Slave Trade question claimed his first attention; and he was on the 11th of January "with Lord Castlereagh for an hour, when he told me all that had passed between him and the other powers."[13] It was not a gratifying audience. Lord Castlereagh indeed had done his utmost, but he had met with the most determined opposition. The allied sovereigns agreed upon a letter to the King of Portugal, urging him to fix a definite and speedy time for the Abolition of the Trade; but they declined to make it piracy, or concede a mutual right of search;[14] and soon after, "both the French and Americans refused to come into the plan of conveying the right of trying slave ships to commissioners from each nation, want-

[12] Diary. [13] Diary, Jan. 11.
[14] Report of African Institution.

ing to draw from us some concession of our maritime rights."[15]

What steps to take in this great cause was now a most perplexing question. An indignant sense of the wrongs and miseries which were wearing out the West Indian negroes burned within him, and he "longed to proclaim the grievances of" his "poor black clients;" and was "strongly disposed to bring their case forward;"[16] yet to do so at this moment would be to give up all chance of the general suppression of the Trade, and that without any reasonable hope of a prosperous campaign at home. He well knew that he must rouse the moral feeling of this country before he could enforce the demands he longed to make in behalf of the slave population. The time for this was not come. He sounded the Wesleyan Methodists, and they, who would be something in advance of others, were still for leaving to their masters all improvements in the condition of the slaves. He tried the opposition, whom he had unwillingly been forced to think his readiest supporters,[17] and even they hung back.[18] The colonial assemblies

[15] Diary, Jan. 15, 1819.

[16] Letter to Z. Macaulay Esq. Dec. 15, 1818.

[17] "I think with you," he told Mr. Bankes, Sept. 23, "that —— has acted and is acting very unwarrantably in his opposition; but that is no business of mine. He supports my African cause in all its extent, and I would not make him my enemy; the less so because government will not treat us fairly in West Indian questions. Had they done so, I should have taken a more forward part against opposition. For another important interest may fairly make you keep back, though it ought not to regulate the side you take upon a question."

[18] Even in May, 1820, the Edinburgh Review declared, No. LXVI., "Without slaves those islands could not be maintained."

had passed or were passing registration bills, and the government at home were doing what they could to render them effectual. It was a most unpropitious moment for exertion,[19] and he could only prepare the minds of men for future measures, while he watched every opportunity of present service—as when he "went with Lord Gambier to the Admiralty: we could not see Lord Melville, but I wrote him a letter stating the extreme need of ships of war on the African coast, and how much the Slave Trade was increased."[20] But though less than usual could be done in his own cause he found no time for idleness. The political calm with which the session opened, afforded an opportunity for bringing forward many different measures connected closely with humanity and morals, in all of which he took an active part.

His daily occupations differed so little from those of the preceding spring, that the copious transcripts of his Diary at that time will render needless any but a few of the most interesting extracts of the present season. Some of these throw a strong light upon his character. "I thank you for your truly friendly conduct," is his answer to a friend who had transmitted to him the censures of another on his conduct, "and I beg you to join my dear and excellent brother-in-law in helping me to correct my own infirmities;

[19] Justly did La Fayette write to him at this time, "Vous avez eu par votre courageuse persévérance des succes inespérés; le plus fort est fait: la victoire sera complétée, et nos neveux dans ce cas comme dans bien d'autres ne comprendrons pas qu'il y ait eu à combattre."—To W. Wilberforce Esq. Aug. 7, 1819.

[20] Diary, Jan. 15.

as you have so often kindly borne with them. For this end the first step will always be to tell me of my faults, and I trust I can truly say I shall love you the better for so doing, and even if I do not think you right I shall be sure that your motive was friendly. You must also flap me and rouse and aid my decaying memory. Poor dear Babington! I miss him often in this way."

These were not idle words. In presenting on the 9th of February a petition from the Quakers against the severe enactments of our penal code, he expressed his deep regret for the loss of that great man who had made this subject his especial study. This warm and feeling language drew on him a remonstrance for having termed Sir Samuel Romilly "a great and good man." "Had a truly honest and Christian-like letter from Mr. Poynder," is the humble entry of his Diary, "to which I replied I trust in the same strain, on my eulogium on Sir Samuel Romilly. Perhaps I went too far, though the newspaper made me say more than I did. But, alas, I well know how often I am led away into saying what I never meant! How can I but add the above," he continues, "when I am fresh from the House of Commons on Bennett's motion,[21] in the debate on which most unaccountably, except from my not having at all meditated before-hand what I should say, I am told, and I fear justly notwithstanding some opposite assurances, that I was extremely harsh against Castlereagh. How strange

[21] For an inquiry into the condition of the country.

this! I really have a personal regard for him, have always wished, and do now wish him well, and did not in the least mean to be severe, especially against *him*. He had no interest in preventing the inquiry. However, may God forgive me, and enable me to act in a way more agreeable to my Christian character of peace, and love, and meekness. I am truly and deeply hurt by the consciousness, though quite relieved by a few friendly words which passed between Castlereagh and me in going out of the House."

Yet he adds two days later—"Feb: 22nd. House. Tierney's amendment on Castlereagh's motion, that the £10,000" [assigned to the Duke of York as custos of the King's person] "should come from the privy purse, not the civil list. The best debate I have witnessed for a long time. Castlereagh, Tierney, Peel, Bankes, Solicitor-General, Scarlett, all did well. I had really the plan of a good and very telling speech from its taking up some of Peel's points, but, partly from my distress about Castlereagh, I came away without speaking, and government carried it by 95. I voted with the opposition."[22]

Many welcomed eagerly his connexion with this cause. Amongst others Mr. Simeon tells him in a friendly letter,[23] "I rejoice that the revision of our laws is, as far as the bringing of it before parliament goes, committed to you. You have not the legal knowledge of Sir Samuel, but you have (pace tuâ) more practical wisdom and moderation: nor will your success in advocating the cause give undue advantage to licentious Jacobins."

[22] Diary. [23] Feb. 11.

He had too much practical discernment to be enticed into a service for which his overburthened powers would no doubt have proved unequal, and his speech of February 9th had been a part of his old "wisdom, in setting others upon a good scent instead of following it himself." He replies to Mr. Simeon—

"London, Feb. 12, 1819.

"My dear Friend,

I must not only have weak eyes, but no eyes, not to return three lines to so affectionate a salutation. But you, I find, like many others, have seen what I said the other day misstated, for I expressly guarded against the supposition of conceiving myself equal to such a service, as that of revising our laws so far as respects capital punishments. I can write but little. I can scarcely read at all. That infirmity alone would be an absolute preventative. The fact is that I called on the House in general, not without an anticipation that my call would be answered by Sir James Mackintosh. He possesses many of the desirable qualities, though combined with some which I wish did not exist. But, I must check myself, thanking you for your hint about Mr. Atkinson and the Rasp House. Farewell.

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Though he would not undertake the conduct of this cause, his Diary will show that he gave to it what time he could. "March 2nd. House. Mackintosh on Capital Punishments. He spoke admirably. I

very middling. 4th. With Lord Lansdown to Rush, to talk over Abolition being made piracy by England first . . United States to follow our example . . or to propose our doing it conjointly. He, as I anticipated, clearly preferred the former. Canistered,[21] and to House. Canning's excellent speech on returning thanks to Marquis Wellesley and the army. Glorious country—when a reserve in Hislop's case on the ground of his not having yet proved the justice of his executing the Killadar. 12th. To Committee on Capital Punishments, and House: Brougham having told me he would present New South Wales petition. 13th. General Hall, late Governor of Mauritius, with us to breakfast. He opened a world of villany in Slave Trade, peculation, &c. 15th. To the House. Heard —— confess that he had wrongly denied through defect of memory, &c.; that his memory refreshed, &c. I may recollect my own decaying memory, and pray to be kept out of such circumstances. Heard —— preach. Very clever, but wanting tenderness and flow. Too jerking and popping. In the evening Gerard Noel preached on 'Then they that feared the Lord,' &c.—a subject congenial with his own nature and dispositions. It was quite balsamic. 19th. Bill on Game System—second reading carried, 110 to 83. I spoke pretty well, wholly without preparation. I get scarcely any time for study. I divide my time between such a variety of objects that I never prepare for debates. This must be

[21] Another entry may serve as a comment upon this expression. "Eat cold meat from canister; as good a dinner as can be desired."

amended. 24th. African Institution. Stephen spoke beautifully on Sir S. Romilly. Canistered. House, The case of the London Fire Act clergy—spoke." [25] "I cannot hear," he said, "without disgust honourable gentlemen declare their attachment to the Church. and then propose to pay the clergy with a miserable pittance which they would not deem a fit provision for men of education in any other line of life whatever."

"April 2nd. Saw various characters in the morning. Then to Committee on Criminal Law. Then to Grattan's about three—Plunket, Newport, Tierney, Abercrombie, Brougham, Mackintosh, &c. We agreed about Roman Catholic Motion—then to a meeting of the Berbice Commissioners. 6th. Dined at Duke of Gloucester's. I felt awkward about cards, though I declared I did not make a point of conscience of not playing. 7th. Bennett's motion for stopping the sailing of a vessel with female convicts to New South Wales. Never was there a clearer case. I seconded in order to soften, and to induce them to stop the ship, by stating that its being thought that some remedy might be devised for the evils of the middle passage, and of New South Wales, was a reason sufficient. Greatly beat, alas! 16th. Mr. Pictor, an American gentleman, introduced by Southey —a good federalist—near four years in Europe travelling—at Gottingen some time—the professors there quite sceptical. Schlegel become a Roman Catholic. In Spain the commonalty can generally read; he asked them a thousand times to try, and

[25] Diary.

found they could. Inquisition had begun to fulminate against the damnable errors of Luther. No safe travelling except under protection of contrabandists —he travelled safely guarded by fourteen of them— the Seville merchants give their bills of exchange to them—they smuggle dollars out of the kingdom. The Spaniards a fine people; with respectful and kind words you may get any thing done by them. This shows why they disliked their deliverers and payers, the English, more than their squeezers, the French; the former overbearing, the latter courtly. 19th. Sismondi called for an hour or two in the evening, and showed himself a man of first-rate talents.

"May 2nd. Sunday morning, Gerard Noel—evening, Mr. Matthias from Dublin, a most striking preacher. Lady O. and M., and an infant schoolmaster dined—the Barrys with us. Alas! I quite shrink from the week that is before me. Well, God has graciously supported me hitherto, and still let me trust in Him. I know not what to make of this hurrying residence; my continuance here claims my most serious consideration."

It was from the prominent part always allotted him on these occasions that he so greatly shrunk. No man ever attended them with a simpler or more fervent spirit, or entered therefore with more feeling into all their true excellence. "There really is in such a scene," he writes to a friend,[26] "a moral sublimity, which, if duly estimated, would be worthy of the tongues of angels; and indeed, I doubt not, they who

[26] To the Rev. J. W. Cunningham, May 17, 1832.

are declared by our blessed Lord to sympathize with the poorest, repenting, earthly sinner, do participate in the joy and thankfulness which are called forth in our Christian assemblies, in hearing of the general diffusion of the word of God, and of the labours, and sufferings, and blessed be God the triumphs also, of those zealous missionaries who are devoting their lives in distant lands to the service of their Divine Master."

Never perhaps was his eloquence more winning than when on these subjects it flowed fresh from his full heart—and many a stranger to the ordinary excitements of the town returned at the week's end into the country nerved by it afresh for his path of solitary labour. "I shall never forget," says one who thus heard him, "the effect of a short speech of his upon my own mind. He was alluding to some natural difficulties which had impeded the success of missions, which ought not to discourage us; for nature seemed often, as well as man, to fight against St. Paul. He was not merely 'scourged with rods,' but 'thrice he suffered shipwreck.' The tone, the manner, the voice in which he brought out this simple thought was so overpowering, that I went home with it ringing in my ears for days. It was the hope of being thus useful which reconciled him to what he would have shrunk from otherwise as a needless display. In the country he made it an invariable rule, to take no part at such meetings unless he was peculiarly connected with the place. Thus in the preceding autumn he went with Mr. Wordsworth to a Bible

meeting held at Kendal, "because it falls within my rule, being now my market town." But in London he would not churlishly refuse this service. "I really know no way in which you do so much good in so little time, as when by a few words of congratulation on an anniversary, you give action and efficiency to those who bear the labour and heat of the year."[27] This ready sympathy with the feelings of others was a beautiful feature of his mind. "To give pain," he says, "to a man who lives quietly, and whose spirits are not naturally high, is a very different thing from inflicting the same stroke on any one circumstanced in all respects as I am, when it is only like a shove received in a crowd; you forget it in a moment as it is succeeded by another."[28]

The bustling week to which he was looking forward began upon the 3rd of May, with "Breakfasted Dr. Hamilton (Irish) Owen, Mons. Kieffer from Paris, Mons. De Solles, (stating the friendly disposition of the present French government to our Bible Society,) and to Methodist Mission Society, where a full meeting—afterwards Church Missionary House—eat cold meat—and House—Catholic Question. Grattan long, and very inaudible. The debate went off quite unintentionally; Peel and Plunket waiting for each other—so that only Grattan, Croker, (very cleverly,) Leslie Forster, Lord Normanby, Brownlow, and Becher, and I lost my opportunity with many others.

"4th. Church Missionary anniversary. Dear

[27] Letter to J. Stephen Esq. May 12.
[28] To Mrs. Wilberforce, Aug. 23.

Lord Gambier in the chair, and closed with a hymn after opening with a prayer. I spoke warmly, and so pretty well. Mr. Matthias from Dublin very good. Delightful meeting. Lodgings and writing, when I recollected Lottery Resolutions. Hurried down to the House, and found Van. concluding his defence of Lotteries against Lyttleton, who I heard had spoken long and ably. I drawing up Canning, the debate became lively and warm. Castlereagh, Huskisson, and Tierney, Plunket and others—beat by 183 against 88; but the real opinion of the House and country clear, and rendered more so by Tierney having spoken out plainly and honourably; yet I grieve for poor Vansittart, who not having had nerves enough to resolve against it, perhaps not feeling his strength sufficient, heard himself defended on grounds which must have been most offensive to him. Poor Canning too —how grievous it is to hear him so unjust to his own real kindness of heart, as to attempt to turn into ridicule the story of distress told by Buxton with great effect!

"5th. Several breakfasters. Bible Society anniversary. Charles Shore spoke with fascinating tenderness. I was called on suddenly, but D. G. did pretty well. Then cold meat—and Downing Street. Then House on Irish Window Tax, and supposed I should vote with Shaw and Parnell, but though supported by all Plunket's forces, really government's cause so good that I was bound to support them.

"11th. Naval and Military Bible meeting. House. Lord Camden's generous gift to the public, and Tierney acknowledged it very handsomely. It is a

sad proof of the low moral tone of the world, that people in general say, 'More fool he.' Then Bill for protecting the New Zealanders and Otaheitans.

"15th. British and Foreign School Society. Duke of Kent in the chair. Oh how glad I am that the tenth meeting is this day over! The consumption of time is really too great." "Would it had been my favoured lot," writes Hannah More,[29] "to hear one of twelve speeches in ten days." The wonder is how with his feeble health he stood such constant fatigue. A house crowded with "inmates".. their number swelled every morning by a tide of "breakfasters" . . then a throng of "callers"—a crowded meeting at which he made often a long, always an animated speech—then a budget of letters to be read and answered—his only rest or food a "canistered" dinner; and then the House, where he sat long, and sometimes spoke again, not getting home till "all were gone to bed." It is not a little striking, to turn to some of his letters to his children, written in the midst of such a life as this; often at hurried intervals when waiting for an audience at an office, or some such scrap of time; ("for I always take the raw material with me to such places, and work it up into the manufactured article as opportunity permits;") but showing even in their fair and legible characters how much he consulted the feelings of those to whom he wrote. A sample or two of this correspondence, maintained once a week at least with each of his absent children, will best show his tone of mind.

[29] June 26.

"My dear ——,[30]

I stop at a friend's house in London solely to write to you a few lines; sincerely concerned at my having been so engrossed by a host of callers, as not to secure a single quarter of an hour secure from interruption to converse by pen and ink with my very dear absent child. Yet as when you were a little boy I used to delight in taking a passing kiss of you, so now it is quite gratifying to exchange a salutation with you on paper, though but for a minute or two. The sight of my hand-writing will call forth in my dear affectionate —— all those images of parental and family tenderness, with which the Almighty permits us to be refreshed, when children and parents are far separated from each other. You have a heavenly Father too, my dearest boy, who loves you dearly, and who has promised He will never leave you nor forsake you, if you will but devote yourself to His service in His appointed way. O my dearest boy, pray in earnest; guard against formality in prayer. Endeavour to place yourself as it were in the presence of God when you call upon Him. Again and again, may God bless and preserve you, and grant you His Holy Spirit, and a disposition to deny yourself. But I must break off: somebody has been talking to me almost all the time I have been writing, so if there are mistakes excuse them; and believe me ever,

Yours most affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

[30] Aged 13.

TO THE SAME.

"My dearest ——,

The last letter from home communicated to you the death of one young friend, my present letter will convey the account of an event still less to be expected; that of the death of poor B. Poor young man, he sadly disappointed all his real friends, not only by failing in his studies, but also I fear by a licentious course of conduct. Suddenly he was thrown on a bed of sickness. Mercifully God gave him some days for repentance, and we are not without hope he may have found mercy, for he was very penitent. But, alas! dependence on a death-bed repentance, is a sad dependence indeed! O my dear boy, may you remember your Creator in the days of your youth; then whether you live or die, all will be well. Farewell, my very dear ——, I am sadly hurried, but I would not omit writing to you to-day.

I am ever your affectionate Father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

TO THE SAME.

"My very dear ——,

I cannot tell you how much I am gratified by your affectionate letter received this morning. I am very glad that you like your new situation—one of the grand secrets to be remembered in order to enable us to pass through life with comfort, is not to expect too much from any new place or plan—on the whole

the report I have of you is gratifying. But there is one quarter of my prospect which I hope my beloved child will endeavour to brighten. I fear you do not apply to your business with energy. This remember was your fault before, and you alleged that it arose in a great degree from your wanting spirits, through having no play-fellows for your hours of recreation, no schoolmaster for your seasons of business. A horse never goes so cheerfully alone as when animated by the presence of a companion, and a boy profits from the same quickening principle; but my dearest —— has not now this damper to plead. Another great benefit to be derived from being with other boys is, that of learning to give up our own will and way with good humour. * * * Farewell, my beloved ——, I believe you will be the comfort of your old father's declining years.

Ever your most affectionate,

W. WILBERFORCE."

TO THE SAME.

"My dearest ——,

I have not either time or eyesight to-day sufficient to send you what from its size, may deserve the name of a letter; but a letterling it may be called, and you know the old passage, Inest sua gratia parvis—a maxim which from my not being myself of extravagantly large dimensions, I may be supposed to consider a very reasonable proposition. I am glad to find (and it is quite a drop of balm in my heart when I hear of

my dear boy's going on well) that you are setting to work doggedly, as Dr. Johnson used to term it; but I like neither the word nor the idea. I hope my dear boy will act from a higher principle than one which I have seen in a poor animal in a team, when the *taste* of the waggoner's whip has made him resolutely set all his muscular force in action, and pull up a steep as if determined to master it. But my dearest —— will be prompted by a nobler set of motives; by a desire of pleasing God and showing his gratitude to his Saviour, and not grieving the Holy Spirit; of giving pleasure to a father and mother who are watching over his progress with tender solicitude. I have been looking over some old papers till my heart is not a little affected. How year passes away after year, and first one person is snatched away and then another! Little did I expect I should outlive so many much more robust, and many of them younger than myself. But to persons of your age as well as mine, the lesson is read, 'Be thou also ready.' And then, my dearest boy, we shall never part, if we have made our calling and election sure; we shall never again be in the storm, but remain for ever in the enjoyment of the pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore. I remembered that you would receive this on a Sunday, and therefore permitted myself to fall into a serious strain. Indeed I am always tempted to sing in this key when I am addressing one of my absent children, because loving them so dearly I am naturally drawn into the discussion of those topics in which their best interests are concerned. Above all things, my dear ——, at-

tend to your private devotions. Beware of wandering thoughts. If you do but pray in earnest, I am *sure* all will be well. May God bless and preserve you. Poor —— has suffered grievously from the bite of a gnat; her arm from the shoulder to the finger has been greatly inflamed, but D. G. she is now getting better. I remember Dr. Clarke says, the Russian soldiers often die from the bites of the gnats in the country bordering on the Crimea; and yet it used to be said, that 'You flay a Muscovite to make him feel.' God bless you, my dearest ——.

Ever your affectionate Father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

But to return to the Diary. "17th. A very large and miscellaneous party of breakfasters. Afterwards called on —— at Holland House. Shown up to Lady Holland under the name of its being Lord Holland." She pressed me to come to breakfast. I see plainly that —— and —— pay the price of civility to her for their kind reception at Holland House. But it may be out of good will to Lord Holland who is truly fascinating, having something of his uncle's good humour. 18th. Early with Lord Liverpool about Boyd's business. . £6000 the sum fixed on. House, on Tierney's motion[31] till all over. By far the largest number that ever was known; 354 (amongst whom I myself) against 178, about 24 paired off, 4 Tellers, and Speaker. 24th. House on Secret Committee. Report about the currency. Tierney very bitter. Peel very good—all

[31] For a committee on the state of the nation.

but at the last, excellent. Adjourned 25th. House. resumed debate, and at last opposition persuaded to be quiet. 26th. Canistered, as I went to the House. Sir C. Monck about Parga. A horrid story. Castlereagh gives the papers, but no hopes of preserving from the Turks a place which they will give Ali Pacha, that bloody tyrant. 27th. Large party. Breakfasters—strange assortment. Lady Holland sends me O'Meara's book.

"June 1st. I was doubting to-day, whether or not to give up a whole day to praying for——, but we are so plainly told mercy is preferred to sacrifice that I believe I am pleasing God most by only spending a part in prayer and the greater part in business. Blessed be God mine are labours of love. 10th. House. Foreign Enlistment Bill. Sir James Mackintosh made a splendid and beautiful, but not convincing speech, for he almost skipped over the treaty with Spain, which is to me the decisive part. 11th. Committee on Criminal Law. Resolved to put off bringing forward a bill this year, as too late; the new law-officers opposing; treading in the Chancellor's steps. 24th. Gloucester House—a committee of the African Institution. They assented to my motion, that now too late to go on with the Piracy Bill this year. House. Red River business. Sir James Montgomery, Ellice, Scarlett, William Smith, Bennett, and Goulburn, all did well in their several manners—Smith very acute; Montgomery singularly attic, simple, and clear. Ellice manly and strong." "I understand," writes Lord Selkirk, shortly afterwards, "that

you had an intention of expressing your sentiments; but that the turn which the debate took did not afford a good opportunity. I regretted this much at the time, being persuaded that even two or three sentences from you would have been of material service to our cause."[32]

"28th. Breakfast—a numerous one, and several callers besides. Kept till full late, but just in time to meet Stephen, and Lord Teignmouth, and Macaulay, for interviews with Lord Liverpool and Bathurst about the new Slave Trade Bill—then House. General Boyd's business. Marryatt's ill-natured and well-arranged speech. I found Castlereagh quite ignorant, and disposed to take against me. Sir James Mackintosh did us much good, and Vansittart. July 1st. House. Burdett on Reform of Parliament. I had meant to speak if good opportunity, but was over-fatigued."

He closed the labours of the session by moving on the 7th an address to the Regent on the suppression of the Slave Trade, by which he hoped to quicken the exertions of our government, and produce some effect on France.

"Various considerations prevent our taking a very distant flight," he tells Dr. Chalmers, at the beginning of the holidays, "we therefore shall hover round the metropolis, our greatest distance being 100 miles, to visit Mrs. Hannah More, the Bishop of Gloucester, and two or three other friends. But, my dear Sir, though with so much reason to be thankful for the associates whom a gracious Providence has given me,

[32] To W. Wilberforce Esq. July 22.

I cannot but covet Dr. Chalmers; and there is another gentleman (Southey the poet) whom also I long to see again, having enjoyed some of his society last year. Perhaps if we should all live till next year, and again set our faces northwards, you would meet us in our English paradise, for that name I must give to the Lake country." One of the first amongst these visits was to Barham Court, "which," he says to Mr. Stephen,[33] "is now in full beauty, I never saw it in greater. We arrived late on Wednesday, and you would be pleased to know how much I have walked about to-day. You know the Noels: could you not come here from Saturday next to the Monday following. How you would revel in the walks of this fruitful scene of multiform production, farm, woodland, corn-fields of all kinds, meadows, garden, orchard! Never did I see a place of such varied forms of beauty and fertility. Come on Friday after your business, I beg of you, that you may have all Saturday for your rambles. I shall like the place as well again, when I shall have witnessed the raptures which I am sure it will kindle in you. To be sure, it does forcibly impress on me Cowper's famous line, borrowed however from some preceding poet,

> 'God made the country, but man made the town.'

But I must say farewell. God bless you. Ever your most affectionate friend, and especially in my quiet Sundays,

W. WILBERFORCE."

[33] July 21.

TO THE SAME.

Blaize Castle,[34] Bristol, Sept. 15.

" My dear Stephen,

Though you had not dated your letter from any place, I could have pronounced it to have been written from a high elevation, where you were breathing more freely, and striding more confidently, than in the vale below. Really it quite gratifies me to see you with my mind's eye so much at your ease. We are all well after paying an eight days' visit to Mrs. H. More, and having been three or four in this hospitable mansion, I really think the sweetest residence of a private gentleman to be found in England, except perhaps, though I doubt if it be to be excepted, Morritt's of Rokeby. It is also as well provided for a rainy day as a fine one, having a good library, and many beautiful works of art, both in sculpture and painting. The young ones being near the Wye were so desirous of seeing it that I did not like to refuse them so innocent a pleasure, and accordingly we are going off early to-morrow morning. For myself I own I seem past such schemes, if I were to consult my own pleasure: and I am grieved to neglect my business. I have a sad account of the Slave Trade from the man whose letter you saw. I am writing to Castlereagh to send a person to ascertain the truth or falsehood of the statement.

" Farewell, my dear Stephen. I can quite rejoice in the idea of your stalking along your hills, and

[34] The seat of J. S. Harford Esq.

spouting, or musing, or talking to yourself. I wish I could join you.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

At the Deanery at Wells, where he staid[35] some time, his attention was much occupied by the affairs of Hayti. "I understand that the C.s have resolved to go there, and I own I am glad of it. It absolves me from all responsibility, while it obtains for Hayti the services of people, who I hope may be useful, though I dare not in conscience rely on the morality of persons in whom I have no reason to believe there is a deep principle of religion, when they are going into a country where vice is not discreditable. But, my dear Stephen, I cannot tell you how deeply I feel the not having taken more pains to promote the religious and moral improvement of that interesting people. In this instance, as, alas, in so many others, I find myself at once comforted by the blessed assurances of pardon from God, who delighteth in mercy through the atonement and intercession of our great Mediator and Advocate, while I am at the same time supplied with the most powerful of all motives, gratitude and generous shame, to exert myself with augmented earnestness for the time to come. I wish beyond measure you could help me in getting some schoolmistresses, and also some missionaries, though the latter must be men of uncommon prudence and moderation.

[35] With the Bishop (Ryder) of Gloucester.

"We stay here D. V. till Monday sennight, and then I believe shall fix for a week or so at Malvern. Oh how I wish I could yet do any good before I am called away! Of the uncertainty of life we have just now had a fresh instance in the death of Mrs. Patty More. Never was there a more generous, benevolent creature, more self-denying to herself, or kind to others; and her natural tempers, blessed be God, were sanctified by just views of religion, or rather by that Divine Spirit which produced and confirmed them."[36] "Patty sat up with me," he says in his Diary, "till near twelve, talking over Hannah's first introduction to a London life, and I, not she, broke off the conference; I never saw her more animated. About eight in the morning when I came out of my bed-room I found Hannah at the door—'Have you not heard Patty is dying? They called me to her in great alarm,' at which from the ghastliness of her appearance I could not wonder. About two or three hours after our parting for the night, she had been taken ill."[37] She lingered for about a week.

His various wanderings are pleasantly retraced in a letter to another friend.[38] "My summer, which began late, has been spent almost entirely with various friends;—the Noels, at my old haunt of Barham Court, near to which you once endured the labours, if not the dangers of war (on Cox Heath);—my valuable old friend, Mrs. Hannah More, whom we the rather visited, because we deemed it but too probable that if

[36] To J. Stephen Esq. Sept. 19.
[37] Diary, Sept. 9.
[38] Ralph Creyke Esq.

we should not see her this summer we might never see her alive in another; and such is the uncertainty of life, that we witnessed the death-bed, and nearly the actual departure, of her younger and stronger sister—then we spent a few days at the romantic and beautiful seat, Blaize Castle, of my friend Mr. Harford; and afterwards a fortnight with the Bishop of Gloucester, whom I heartily wish you could hear and see both in his public ministrations and in his private life; he is really what a bishop should be—for humility, industry, zeal with sobriety, hospitality, and above all for love in all its kinds and directions, he is really a bright specimen; and the veneration and affection that are felt for him by all who know him, even by those who do not entirely concur with him in religious principles, are seen beaming from every countenance, and sparkling in every eye. He practically remembers the motto of old Archbishop Usher's seal ring—Væ mihi si non evangelizavero. On the week-days he visits different country parishes, whence the income of his deanery is derived, and collects round him as crowded congregations as are usually found in a well-frequented church. Then we were seduced into spending near a fortnight at Malvern, having visited it with the intention of merely a twenty-four hours' cursory survey. For the recovery of an invalid, or for the means of enabling an old man to toddle up the mountains (not quite Himalayans) without fatigue or even effort, it is by far the first of all English elysiums. Then we spent a little

time with Mrs. W.'s widowed mother, whence I paid a second short visit to a sweet lady friend to meet, by his and her urgent desire, the Duke of Gloucester for a few days en ami, (must I not be an inch or two taller for the distinction?) Then I was for but four or five days with my dear and most excellent friend Babington, and am here paying a pop visit to my kind friend and relative, Samuel Smith, whose large family now occupies a palace which might be supposed to be graduated high in the scale of edifices as the residence of Rumbold, when it was raised at least ten degrees higher by becoming the habitation of Paul Benfield, and now I am crawling like snail unwillingly to —— Sutton.

"It is really true, that seldom has a boy returned on a black Monday with more reluctance than I to St. Stephen's. I believe we think pretty much, perhaps quite, alike as to the course required by the present state of the country. On the whole, I cannot but hope well for it, though I dare not be too confident that we may not witness scenes of something nearer to civil war, than this land has exhibited since 1646; and if it should come to such extremities, the bitterness and cruelty with which the contest would be carried on, would be far greater than in that sad struggle; as much more so, as the disciples of irreligion will be commonly more cruel than the misguided religionist." Such apprehensions filled the minds of all reflecting men. Upon the anniversary of the death of his sister, he writes to Mr. Stephen.

"Oct. 18, 1819.

"My dear Stephen,

I cannot suffer this memorable day to pass over without assuring you that while I call to mind her whom we lost three years ago, I am still more forcibly impressed with the sense of that long and uniform course of unvaried kindness which my dear sister, as well as her brother, have experienced at your hands. Hand is a common phrase, but very inadequate to express my meaning, for I am sure your friendship has appeared in heart, head, feet, arms, hands, whenever they could contribute to our benefit and comfort.

"I have received a letter from Morritt, stating that the West Riding of our county is in an alarming fermentation—the lower orders too generally corrupted, and the merchants and higher manufacturers scarcely daring to resist the tide of blasphemy and sedition. You may remember the assassination of a merchant three or four years ago near Huddersfield, when it was said that at the time the fatal shot was fired, there was a general shout of triumph from the tops of houses, hay-stacks, and other elevated situations. The Whigs have called the county of York together by a requisition, specifying as the objects for consideration, the conduct of the Manchester magistrates, and whether the constitutional rights of the people had been invaded. Lascelles and my old friends met and agreed to offer to attend the meeting, and to join in an application to the Regent to call

parliament together, if besides the Manchester business there might be added an allusion to the disturbed state of certain districts, and a declared resolution to resist all attempts to subvert the constitution. This however was refused. I own, to you I may say it safely, that I am afraid of alienating the minds of all the opposition, and indisposing them to the support of our West Indian questions. Still, in the present state of the country, I believe it will be right to look with a single eye at the object immediately recommended to my attention by the actual situation of affairs, and to pursue it with steadiness and zeal. I must lay down my pen. Farewell.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

All his letters were now tinged by this subject. "Let me beg you," he asks a friend at Sheffield, "when you write to give me all the information you can concerning the state of mind of your lower orders, and particularly whether the religious part of your community has in these trying times been acting worthy of its high calling. I declare my greatest cause of difference with the democrats, is their laying, and causing the people to lay, so great a stress on the concerns of this world, as to occupy their whole minds and hearts, and to leave a few scanty and lukewarm thoughts for the heavenly treasure. * * It really provokes me to a degree of indignation greater I fear than Christianity warrants, to look forward to

what may happen to this highly favoured country from our internal divisions. Party, party is our bane. I feel I think much as Lord Falkland did when he used to stalk about his tent and exclaim, Peace, peace." "I am quite comforted with the intelligence you give me of the opinions of fair and good men, concerning the general conduct of the Lancashire magistrates. How shocking are the resolutions of some of the meetings in the West Riding of Yorkshire! Yet the cause of the seditious being patronized by men of rank and influence, may tend to rescue the multitude out of the hands of the Hunts and Thistlewoods."[39] "I have had no intercourse with government, but really arguments for the necessity of the removal of Earl Fitzwilliam[40] at once present themselves, though I will not pronounce whether the attendant evils may not be such as to countervail the good. Yet I must say I estimate Lord F. far too highly not to hope he will feel even the more warm and active in discharging the duties of a good citizen, for the very purpose of proving that his zeal for his country is not lessened by the treatment he has experienced."[41] Two other letters in a tone very different from each other shall conclude the extracts from his correspondence of this date. The first is to his son (ætat 14) at school, in answer to an application for a subscription to a fire-work fund for the approaching 5th of November.

[39] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Oct. 9.
[40] From the Lord-Lieutenancy of the county of York.
[41] To S. Roberts Esq. Nov. 6.

"My dear ——,

The bustle I have been in for some days must be my apology for having suffered a post to pass without answering your letter. I hope however that the fire-works will be with you by the evening of the 5th. I am almost ashamed of *squibbing* away money when I have too little of it for the distressed; but my dear —— has behaved so well, and in these days of faction it is so peculiarly right to let our loyalty *blaze abroad,* that I cannot refuse adding my contribution. I am truly vexed at not having been able to write sooner; but if the parcel be not in time, you may have a special bonfire for Mr. Hunt, who deserves that distinction about as well as Guy Fawkes. For if he be not quite so desperate a conspirator, he has less than Guy to plead in his excuse. Farewell, my dear boy, and believe me to remain,

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The other letter was to Mr. Bankes.

"Nov. 1, 1819.

"My dear Bankes,

When your letter reached me on Saturday, I was actually about to write to you to express my hopes that you would attend parliament on the 23rd; and to inquire if you had any opinions as to the proper regimen for such a disordered state as the body politic now exhibits. I meant also to send you a let-

ter recently received from Morritt, which paints in very gloomy colours the state of the manufacturing part of our great county. One idea of yours I had anticipated, that I mean of making our law travel with an accelerated pace, and without those pauses which are now so injurious. Some weeks before the prorogation, I pressed the Attorney-General to bring on Carlile's trial for blasphemy before the recess, telling him that the varlet's shop was thronged day and night with visitors. He pleaded having much to do, and little leisure to do it in, and very truly I doubt not; but time ought to have been found for trying such a delinquent. I grieve to hear that his poison, and that of such other venomous beings, is propagated extensively, and greedily sucked in by the lower orders in our manufacturing districts. Again, in Leicester the lower orders are in the habit of meeting by night in parties of twenty-five to practise the pike exercise.

"Your suggestion of authorizing government to proclaim certain districts in certain cases, claims the most deliberate reflection. It seems clear to me that if ever this country should fall into the euthanasia, as Hume calls it, of absolute power, it will be owing to the anarchists, and the manifest necessity of giving up that liberty and those privileges which they abuse. In the instance of the liberty of the press I am really looking out, but hitherto in vain, for some better protection for character than the existing law affords.

"I wish you may be in London a day or two before the meeting, that we may confer on the subjects to come before us. I will show you the judgment of

the Manchester affair, which was formed by a very sensible and dispassionate man, (no partisan of ministers,) who halted at that place a short time after the tumult. I think the magistrates have been unjust to themselves in not publishing what may be called their *case*. The bulk of the people will not forbear forming an opinion, because they are told that hereafter the grounds of a just opinion shall be supplied to them. On the contrary, they will build on such a foundation as they have, and when once they have built they will not quit their edifice because you tell them it is founded on the sand. Farewell. Give my kind remembrances to Mrs. Bankes and your sons, and believe me,

Ever sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The worst feature of the disaffected was their zeal against the Christian faith. "What your Lordship and I saw," he reminds Lord Milton, "amongst the papers of the Secret Committee, gave me but too much reason to fear that the enemies of our political constitution were also enemies to our religion." "Heretofore they inveighed against the inequality of property, and used every artifice to alienate the people from the constitution of their country. But now they are sapping the foundations of the social edifice more effectually by attacking Christianity. The high and noble may be restrained by honour; but religion only is the law of the multitude."[12] It was with

[12] Private Mem.

some indignation that he saw at this time "rich and successful men, secured by the laws against invasions of their property, &c. (especially if men of no great real superiority and personal means of defence,) abusing the constitution and laws as the worst of all possible. I am reminded of the monarch who published a reward for a new pleasure. They have exhausted all other gratifications, and must try the pleasure of complaining; like noble and rich men assuming the garb and food of peasants for a frolic. How disappointed if all to be realized! If the one to be made real peasants, the others really insecure." [43]

In this spirit he entered the House on the first day of the session; and then, and on the 26th, when he "spoke with effect though without premeditation," [44] he maintained forcibly the cause of order. He arraigned the irreligious spirit of this new morality, proved that the bar of the House of Commons was the most improper place for an inquiry into the behaviour of the magistrates, and turning upon those who showed some inclination to reap a factious triumph from the sufferings of their country—"Can there be one man here," he asked, "who does not from his heart lament these transactions? If there be, it must be one who has learned to look to civil war and slaughter for the regeneration of the country, and to regard the overthrow of our religion and our laws as the means of accomplishing their end."

Throughout the stormy session which succeeded, his language was the same. He esteemed "the

[43] Private Mem. [44] Diary, Nov. 27.

situation of the country very critical, and though" he "had no small reason to complain of some members of administration," he "thought it" his "duty to come forward in support of the several measures which were proposed for the preservation of the public peace."[45] His Diary sketches out the advance of the session, and of his own employments. "30th. Lost an hour and half yesterday morning in Bartlett's Buildings meeting, and the rest too short for Haytian letters, so no time for preparation on House of Commons' subjects either yesterday or to-day. Went into city about the ploughmen (for Hayti)—uneasy about them."

"London, Nov. 30, 1819.

"My dear Macaulay,

My heart quite fails me at the idea of sending these four raw creatures into so distant, and to them so strange a clime, without preparing them more for what they have to expect. I began my note meaning to entreat you to talk with them, especially on what I did not mention, the moral, or rather immoral state of society in Hayti. I did talk to them on several points, but not on this, partly from wishing and meaning to speak to each separately, which I could not do last night, and hoped to do to-day. I desired them to confer with you about health, how to proceed on the first symptoms which you would state to them they ought to regard as indications of approaching sickness, and how best to take precautions against its attacks.

[45] Letter to Dr. Milner, Dec. 15.

"But I am so uneasy, that if possible I will go into the city myself, as from their not coming I suppose I shall not see them here, and try to obtain an interview with them. If I do not succeed, let me beg you to confer with them.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"I saw them about four, and talked with them. Then House—Lord Althorpe's motion for referring the papers to a committee—very poor and dull debate, or rather common sensible talk, shop talk, till 'Castlereagh at length spurred Tierney, who retaliated very cleverly. Division 323 to 150. Plunket says, that Lord Grenville's speech in the House of Lords to-night, was the finest display of statesman-like wisdom and eloquence he ever heard. Wellesley good too. Grey also and Lansdown good. I am not qualified to contend with these men, yet if I had time, and would cultivate my powers, I might speak better than any in the House but two or three. I believe I ought to find time, yet I am afraid here of being misled by vanity. Otherwise to my personal comfort I should be far more agreeably employed in study than in the business and letters which now occupy my time. Dec. 1st. Called Grenville—found Duke of Montrose calling to thank him for his speech. No House. Evening, letters. How can I do well in the House, who never can find time to reflect beforehand? 2nd. House—second reading of Seditious Bill. Bed near four. Brougham's long speech—Peel good—

Lyttleton good. 6th. House on Seditious Meetings Bill. I spoke middlingly well, though I forgot my chief argument. I seldom have a quiet hour, so that though these important Bills are going through the House, I get little or no time for considering any speech I might make. This is not giving my character fair play, considering that really what I say is so well received even by the House, and so much better by the country. The complaint in my eyes is a grand impediment. Yet God has been gracious to me, for I have not done myself discredit, and I have once or twice assisted the cause of religion, but oh how much less effectually than if I had been able to think more over the various political questions! Oh may my eye still be single, and may I act on the apostle's rule, 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.'

"9th. Bennett's motion for a Committee on the National Distresses ruined by making it a party business. I spoke, and not amiss—Baring and Ellice very well. Called Canning's this morning—afterwards Lord Liverpool's, where all the booksellers, Butterworth at their head, about the proposed tax and security for publishers.

"10th. My Yorkshire friends claimed me for the wool business. Went with them to Lord Liverpool's. House on Courtenay's complaint of Breach of Privilege in Hobhouse's pamphlet. I spoke, and better satisfied with myself than on any night this session."[46]

"We are in a state of almost combustion," he com-

[46] Diary.

plains amidst these nightly contentions,[47] "which does not suit me as well as it did thirty years ago—

'Calidus juventâ,
Consule Planco.'"

In the hot fit
Of youth and Pitt.

Yet his own mind was quiet in the storm. The next day's Diary affords a glimpse of those deep waters which no political tempests could disturb. "Walked from Hyde Park Corner, repeating the 119th Psalm, in great comfort."[48] His learning this whole psalm by heart in all his London bustle, is a striking instance of the care with which he studied Holy Scripture; and in spite of his complaints, his memory could not have been materially injured, since he could (even with the help of a technical artifice which he now frequently employed) acquire and retain perfectly this long and unconnected passage. To return to the Diary.

"Dec. 14th. Not a minute alone to-day. Money with me during dressing. Then Mr. Scott about the Wool Tax. Then African Institution—Duke of Gloucester there, and Lord Lansdown. Then House —Lord John Russell's motion. He spoke pleasingly—Lord Normanby seconded with more talent, though Romeo-like. Alas! I get no time to myself. To-night Arms Seizing Bill; doubtful what course to pursue, as to whether one or two justices, and by night as well as day; decided for former, on ground

[47] Letter to Venerable F. Wrangham.
[48] Diary, Dec. 12.

of publicity, and the clause requiring time being given, and that in 1812 the same power was given and no abuse followed. O Lord, enable me to decide aright. Blessed be God, I serve a Master who takes the will for the deed.

"16th. Took my place as for some little time past, the last seat on the opposition bench. Finding that opposition complained of it, I named it this evening t Tierney, who behaved very kindly about it.. Several press me strongly to bring forward a committee to inquire into and relieve the distresses of the lower orders. I am much puzzled about it. Sir W. De Crespigny's motion to refer Owen's plan to a committee. I forced to speak against it on the Christian ground.

"17th. Found Owen of Lanark truly placable and good-humoured; he said Vansittart and I right in voting against him." He was no advocate for "a system of morals or instruction not founded on religion." "They would exclude," he complains of such instructors,[49] "religion from life, and substitute knowledge in its stead." "It is only by educating our people in Christian principles, that we can hope to advance in strength, greatness, and happiness. By their efficacy alone can we escape the operation of those causes, which have assimilated other states to the human frame in its infancy, manhood, and decay. But the religion of those states was founded on false principles. They went on from stage to stage of intellectual improvement, emerging from ignorance to knowledge, till

[49] Diary.

the light of day beamed upon the fabric, and betrayed the rotten imposition upon which it was built. The pillar of our greatness is raised upon that basis of all intellectual and moral improvement, the Christian religion."[50] The same sentiments appear continually in all his correspondence. "I never," he tells Hannah More, "answered a letter of yours which passed 'from grave to gay, from lively to severe.' I refer to that in which you gave me the result of your experience concerning the education of the lower orders. In one particular I entirely concur with you; I mean in thinking that to inculcate and enforce Christian principles and Christian practice, should be the grand object, in comparison with which all other knowledge is contemptible." Amongst the novelties which he had found in Westmoreland the year before was one, he tells Mr. Bankes, "which I very much regretted; that I mean of political enmity. I wish, and so I doubt not do you, that our country population should not become Edinburgh Review men—nay, that they cannot be; rather Cobbett and Wooller men—requiring the constant diet of newspapers to gratify their morbid appetite for politics. The late election naturally had this effect for a time, and I am told that there is a regular system for maintaining the anti-aristocratic feelings in their full life and action. One of the chief engines of mischief is a very bitter, and I am told clever, weekly newspaper; and to be sure as an alterative, if one may so term it, of the body politic, one can scarce imagine a more effectual

[50] Speech of Dec. 16.

expedient for changing the whole mass of the blood and humours, and producing sour, morbid secretions, instead of the sweet and wholesome chyle of a healthful constitution. Seriously, the newspapers are now among the very greatest, if not the greatest, evils of the country."

"I used to think you the most violent politician that I knew," he said to a friend living in the country, "but now that I find you take in the Morning Chronicle and nothing else, I am only astonished at your moderation." "Have you reflected," he asks Dr. Chalmers, "on the effects produced in this country by the newspapers? They are almost incalculably great, and on the whole, I fear, very injurious. It is my persuasion that our safety will henceforth be to educate our people up to the newspapers, if I may so express myself. We must so much enlighten them that they may be armed against those delusions of which they are otherwise likely to become the victims." "Yet when I say this, I cannot but remember that we have a corrupt nature, and that the idea, therefore, of the easy and speedy predominance of truth is rather an Utopian speculation."[51] The last debates before the holidays were upon a cognate subject, and his forced absence from them greatly disappointed him.

[51] Vid. a letter to Mr. Roberts, in his Correspondence, for the full expression of his feelings on this point.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

JANUARY 1820 TO JANUARY 1822.

Death of the King—Dissolution of parliament—Dean of Carlisle's death—Attendance on the sick—Paul's Cray—Religious anniversaries—Self-suspicion—Arrival of the Queen—His conduct in parliament—Adjourns the inquiry—Privately addresses the King—Moves and carries an Address to the Queen—Her chief law-adviser undertakes that it shall be accepted—Her reception of it—He is exposed to much calumny — Correspondence — Mr. Bankes — Weymouth — Letter from Lord John Russell—Return to London—Bill of Pains and Penalties—its abandonment—Bath—Death of Christophe—his character—Queen's name finally left out of Liturgy—African Institution—Domestic character—Sessional business—Marden Park and his life there—Occupations —Illness and death of his eldest daughter.

THE year 1820 opened with an unexpected calm. The restrictive Acts of the preceding session, and the clearing of the commercial gloom, quieted the angry spirit of that stormy period. A busy session seemed to be at hand; when the unexpected death of George III. suspended public business, and dissolved the parliament. Mr. Wilberforce's spring passed in its usual employments, marked only by two domestic features; the marriage of his eldest son, and the lingering and fatal illness of his early friend, Dean Milner, of Car-

lisle. He came to Kensington Gore, to attend as usual on the Board of Longitude; and after five weeks of suffering illness, breathed his last upon the 1st of April. "Never was there an easier dismission, which is the more observable because he had fears of the pain of dying; when he was told he was in danger, he grew more composed and calm than he had been before. It is very odd, but I felt rather stunned than melted. Spent the day, after a short prayer, chiefly in writing to different friends."[1] He followed his old friend's remains to their last resting-place at Cambridge, and listened to a funeral sermon preached on him by "Daniel Wilson, who had seized upon the chief constituents of his character—his ponderous sense, his tenderness and kindness, his solid and experimental piety."[2]

Many were the hours he gave to soothing the sick-bed of his friend. Though his life had been spent so much in public, he was no stranger to such scenes; and never was the genuine tenderness which filled his heart more beautifully shown than in these unwitnessed charities. More than one touching instance may be quoted from the private memoranda of a friend, who was at this time a frequent inmate in his family. At the close of one of his days of hurry, perhaps after the stormy contests of the House of Commons, "between twelve and one o'clock he heard that his daughter, who was ill, could get no sleep. Coming into her room, he took her hand, and, kneeling down by the bed, spoke

[1] Diary [2] Ib. April 16.

of the tender shepherd carrying the weak and lame in his bosom to warm and cherish them. Then he applied this to our blessed Saviour; spoke of His tenderness and love; how He would feel for His dear suffering child, and conduct her all the way she had to go, until He took her from this scene of trial and sorrow to a world where sorrow and sighing shall flee away—' a beautiful personification, indicating their haste to leave the mansions of the blessed.' 'In this spirit he prayed with her, and never left the bed until her spirit was visibly soothed and supported."

One other extract shall be given. On the 24th of May he "went down to Paul's Cray, honest Simons's, where a great party at his school fête. Gerard Noel gave us a beautiful sermon. Lord and Lady Jocelyn, Charles Noel, Lady E. Whitbread, and various friends."[3] He was all sunshine at such times, from principle as well as habit. "It is a fault to be silent; every one is bound to present his contribution to the common stock of conversation and enjoyment;" and wherever the group was the most crowded and attentive, he was sure to be found its centre. From all this he stole away, and "asked me" (to quote from the same memoranda) "to walk with him down the village. It was to visit a poor woman, of whom he had heard as in a deep decline. He found out the sick room, and sat down by the bed, and began to speak to her of the love of God, which should dwell in his children's hearts. 'Ask yourself then, do *you* love him. We know how love to our fellow-creatures acts; how it makes us

[3] Diary.

try to please them, bear for their sakes unpleasant or unkind things, pain or hard words, with patience. Now does your love to God act in this way? Do you bear patiently what he sends you *because* he sends it? It is no proof of love to God to do what pleases us, to come for instance, as I have done to-day, to see all those dear children in the society of friends I love. But if you submit to your illness, and give up your will to God's will; if you seek to listen to His voice in this affliction, if you are patient under your sufferings, and gentle to those about you, this will indeed be a proof of love to God. And then think of the happy consequence. He will come and abide with you, and bring such peace and joy into your heart, as none else can bestow. The Comforter will come and dwell with you; not pay you a short visit as I am now paying to my friends here, but dwell with you, and never leave you. Now this is the joy I wish for you.' And then he knelt down, and asked of God to comfort and support her, and after all her sufferings bring her to a world of peace and joy, where the former things shall have passed away. 'It is delightful to me,' he said as we returned, 'to visit such a bed of sickness, to be able to take one ray of joy from the full sunshine of the social circle, to gild her sick room. It has been one of the happiest days I ever spent.'"

"Went," he says, on the 26th of April, "to Freemasons' Tavern Committee room, and afterwards to the Hall on the Duke of Kent's Statue proposal. Duke of Bedford in the chair. Lord Darnley there, Breadalbane, Clifford, &c. I seconded the first re-

solution—kept there latish. I am much pressed to attend the London Missionary Society, but I cannot do it. Last year I was at eight or nine of these public meetings in as many days, but I must not this year." He attended four or five, and was the charm of each one where he took a part; doing according to his own account "pretty well, and every body very kind to me." "But oh how humbled am I to find still in myself solicitude about human estimation! Yet I strive against it, and despise myself for it. O Lord, help me." No one perhaps was ever freer from this fault; but his rigid scrutiny detected in himself the smallest rising of the tempers he condemned. "I should like you," Mr. Stephen said to him when he was once depreciating himself,[4] "to write a life of yourself, and I would write another; and it would be curious to see the different renderings which would be given to the self-same facts." "To one of these meetings," says the friend, whose memoranda have before been quoted, "I went with him, and arrived before the room began to fill. He walked round, looking at the portraits which hung around the walls, and his spirits seemed unusually depressed; after a time, he burst forth into expressions of his grief and self-abasement, at his remembrance of some scenes of revelling, in which, though never given to excess, he had joined in early life within that very room—'To

[4] The occasion is too good to be omitted. "I was so small of stature when a youth," was his account, "that Milner put me on a table to read to the boys." Mr. Stephen interrupted him, "Why, Wilberforce, Milner himself has told me that it was that your elocution might be a model to the school."

what a different use, thank God, are we now about to put it!'" Nothing could surpass the depth of his habitual humility. "Alas," he complains, "how unprofitable a servant I am, if I compare myself with M.! How unspeakably am I humbled! In every particular he excels; in every one I fall short: natural powers make some difference, but the want of Christian exertion makes ten times more. O God, forgive me. I find my body as well as mind indicating weakness, soon tired, and requiring rest. Alas, that I have not better used my faculties! God be merciful to me a sinner. Oh what cause have I to say this! Oh they do not know us as we know ourselves. Lord, help me. I should despair, but for the precious promises of Holy Scripture.[5]

Yet in spite of this low estimate both of his powers and services, no slight labours were before him. The arrival of the Queen soon introduced a new and fearful strife amidst the subsiding waves of civil strife.

The first intimation of this danger is as early as the 27th of April. "The Vice-Chancellor Leach has been trying to root out ministry; he has been telling the King that his present ministers are not standing by him, that he ought to have a divorce. There has been a flirtation between Tierney and the King. I hear Brougham has had the sense or patriotism to see that it is better not to have a public fracas between the King and Queen." All hopes from the St. Omers' conference soon failed. On the 5th of June, "the business of the House was stopped

[5] Diary, June 4.

by Vansittart's declaring on the Grampound Disfranchisement Bill, that the ministers could not attend being called to a Cabinet. It was said to be on account of the Queen's approaching return, who had refused the terms brought by Lord Hutchinson. News at night that the Queen had landed, and was to sleep at Canterbury." On the 6th, "a message was delivered to the House, announcing the Queen's arrival in England, and the necessity of disclosures to parliament. She arrived about six in London—crowds greeting her. She approaches wisely, because boldly. Fixes at Alderman Wood's. Brougham in the house. How deeply interested all are, indeed I feel it myself, about her! One can't help admiring her spirit, though I fear she has been very profligate. Bergami left her at St. Omers."

The 7th brought on the "Green Bag Secret Committee question. I moved the adjournment of the debate till Friday, which was approved by a great majority of the House, in order to give the parties time to effect an amicable accommodation."[6] His part was at once taken. "I resolved if possible to prevent the inquiry; an object which could only be attained by such an amicable adjustment as should give neither party cause for triumph. When therefore Lord Castlereagh had made a motion to refer the papers to the consideration of a secret committee, I endeavoured to interpose a pause, during which the two parties might have an opportunity of contemplating coolly the prospect be-

[6] Diary, June 7.

fore them. Accordingly I sounded the House; my proposition was immediately adopted, and a pause was made with a declaration that its purpose was to give opportunity for a private settlement. What followed is before the world—the correspondence, and subsequently the conferences which took place between the King's servants and the Queen's law-officers. The concessions made by the King's servants, as Mr. Brougham afterwards declared in the House of Commons, were various and great. The name and rights of a Queen were granted to her Majesty without reserve, any recognition of which had formerly been carefully avoided. A Royal yacht, a frigate, &c. were offered. It was agreed that her name and rank should be notified at the court either of Rome or Milan—the capitals of the countries in which she had expressed her intention to reside; and that an Address should be presented to the Queen no less than another to the King, to thank her Majesty for having acceded to the wish of the House of Commons."[7]

During the anxious interval which followed, he was far from idle. He sent his son with an earnest letter to the King, in which he entreated him to restore the Queen's name to the Liturgy, "suggesting the ferment which would be occasioned; that the country would be in a fury, and perhaps the soldiers might take the Queen's part."[8] The negociation still proceeded. "June 9th. Lord Castlereagh came to me on his way up-stairs, and told me he meant to propose to the House to adjourn till Monday. I returned home

[7] Memorandum among his papers. [8] Diary, June 9.

to dinner. Sir James Mackintosh came in, and was as entertaining as possible. After breakfast met Mackintosh about Manumission business. Then to meeting of the British and Foreign School Society, Lord Ebrington in the chair; George Byng supporting him. Quite a Dissenting appearance, I must say; but being there, and arriving an hour too late, I thought it would be rude to come away, so I staid." "Sunday. I fear lest it should please God to scourge the nation through the medium of this rupture between the King and Queen. If the soldiery should take up her cause, who knows what may happen—and is it very improbable? O Lord, deliver us! Thou only canst, who hast the hearts of all at Thy disposal. Yet how gracious God is to me, giving me the acceptable service of putting off the discussion! I go to prayer, and oh may He have mercy on us and avert so great an evil, in answer to the prayers of many among us, who call upon His name, and set their hearts on Him."

Another adjournment on the following day seemed still to promise peace. "I heard this morning, that the Queen had as yet not been prevailed on to concede any thing. But I trust matters will be accommodated."[9] These hopes soon vanished. "I meant to call early on the Bishop of London, but was kept by Brougham's calling. I fear the difficulties will not be superable, except by our taking the matter into our own hands in the House of Commons." "20th. Canning took me to town, and I talked with him

[9] To Mrs. Wilberforce June 15.

about arrangement. Various friends confirmed me that it was right for me to go on by addressing the Queen, (for which room in the papers,) and to try to get her to give up the mention of her name in the Liturgy. So I gave notice. Tierney pressed to know what my motion was to be. I defended myself as well as I could; opposition seem all disposed to take up Queen's cause on party principles. Alas!" [10]

He well knew that by this course he exposed himself to extreme odium and misconstruction. "However, I hope I am averting a great evil." [11] He has recorded the grounds upon which his motion proceeded. "The only material difference which remained between the negociating parties, was that which respected the omission of her Majesty's name from the Liturgy. Her law-officers declared that they pressed the restoration of her name on the grounds of the recognition of her rights, and the vindication of her character, but they several times suggested that an equivalent might be devised which might answer the same purpose. This proposal constituted the ground of my hope that an Address of the House of Commons might effect that adjustment for which former efforts had been made in vain. I could not but be persuaded that if an Address should be carried by a great majority, assuring her Majesty that her giving up the point should be regarded not as arising from any disposition to shrink from inquiry, (an imputation to which her whole conduct had given the lie,) but from a wish to give up her own opinion to the authority of the House

[10] Diary. [11] To Z. Macaulay Esq.

of Commons, this very Address would constitute the equivalent desired. This hope was confirmed by her Majesty's declaration, that she was disposed to yield to the declared sense of the House of Commons." [12]

This reasonable hope was soon greatly shaken. After his return from the House, "just as I was going up to bed, I heard a knocking at the door announcing a letter from the Queen. It was so. Alderman Wood had given her a mistaken account of my notice, and she wrote a warm, expostulatory letter—her own ebullition [Lady Anne Hamilton's hand]. I slept well, I thank God, but next day talking with Wortley and others, we thought our motion should be changed, and there being no time to resettle it, still more wishing that the Queen should have time to consider my answer, on which I hoped Brougham would comment, I resolved, against the advice of all my friends, to put off my motion till to-morrow. The House all impatience, and I obliged [it] to wait, having had conferences with several persons. Tierney, &c. ill-natured, yet Castlereagh gave way. Several of my friends pressed me strongly to make my motion a defence of ministry, but I saw all depended on my keeping to my point—no inquiry."

Leaving the House, "I walked home, calling at Stephen's. There Brougham brought me a second letter from the Queen, more moderate." [13] "Next morning Acland came with the fruits of his morning studies, and his draft of great use to me in drawing Resolution. So pressed that I did not get above one

[12] Mr. Wilberforce's Memoranda. [13] Diary, June 21.

quiet hour for preparing, but God in whom I trusted graciously blessed me, and enabled me to go through my business not discreditably. An immense majority. The House very noisy and impatient; would not hear Acland, or even my own reply quietly. Burdett violent and bitter, but very able. Tierney mischievous Denman strong and straightforward. Brougham able. Canning clever, but not letting himself out. My reply better than my speech, and would have been more so, but that interrupted. Sad work amongst the soldiers my first apprehension—Lord Sidmouth very uneasy, &c."[14] The next day he tells Mrs. Wilberforce, who for the health of his family was on her road to Bath;

"Downing Street, Friday afternoon.

"I thank God from the heart that my business went off yesterday very well, though not quite so well as must have been wished by one who was and is deeply impressed with a sense of its importance. We separated about a quarter-past four this morning, and a lovely morning it was. Our division 391 to 124. I seldom have known so full a House, since numbers must have gone away before the business terminated. We are to present our last night's motion to the Queen to-morrow. I hope she may assent to our wishes, but I am not very sanguine.

"I trust this will find you safely arrived at Bath, and let me hope my dear children will be living under an impression of the many mercies we are all

[14] Diary, June 22.

receiving. What a blessing it is to have been led by a gracious God into paths which——enter Brougham and Denman the Queen's law-officers, and I must make up or be too late.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The next day was fixed by the Queen for receiving the Address. "Dressed at Calthorpe's, and went up with the Resolution (Stuart Wortley, Acland, and Bankes also) to the Queen in Portman Street. The populace most violent, and I received a letter (kindly meant) whilst in the House, desiring me to come out postico, but it was not a case for this had I been to be killed, (of which in truth there was no danger,) we being representatives of the House of Commons." [15] "All the four members alighted without any interruption. They were dressed in full Court costume, and showed a proper insensibility to the uncourteous manner in which they were greeted by the multitude. Mr. Wilberforce read the Resolutions." [16] "Alas!" he says, "the answer most decidedly rejected our mediation." [17]

TO MRS. WILBERFORCE.

"Downing Street, Saturday, June 24.

"I grieve from the bottom of my heart to say that with my brother messengers I am lately returned from our visit to the Queen, bringing back her an-

[15] Diary. [16] Times, June 26. [17] Diary.

swer, civil in terms to the House of Commons, but positively rejecting our proposal. Her manner was extremely dignified, but very stern and haughty. There was a great mob about the door, which if it had been night would have been very dangerous, but no stones were thrown, &c. I am not surprised by her rejection of our offer, though I deeply regret it.

"What is next to be done deserves the most serious consideration. Whatever ensues, it will always be a consolation to me to reflect that I have done my best to prevent all the evils that may happen."

The grounds of his own conduct are more fully stated in a letter of a few days' later date.

TO SAMUEL ROBERTS ESQ.

"My dear Sir,

To you I will frankly confess that I should myself have given the preference to the proposition suggested in the letter in the Sheffield Iris—that of moving for the restoration of the Queen's name to the Liturgy. I myself have never concealed my opinion that it was a wrong step to leave the Queen's name out, and consequently I could not but have wished for its re-insertion. But I had all but an absolute certainty that this motion would be rejected, and then we should have had no resource. The ministers had been contending, as it is supposed, with the King very strenuously: they had once even resigned their of-

fices; and I presume that they must have considered the omission of the Queen's name as part of a compromise to which they were bound to adhere. Be this as it may, it is notorious that a few days before my motion, they called all their adherents together, and explained to them without reserve, that all the members of the Cabinet had agreed to resign their offices if the question for restoring the Queen's name to the Liturgy should be carried against them. Now, the influence of government in the House of Commons is so great, that I could not have hoped to carry a motion, against which all who possess offices would have fought so furiously, as well as all those who conceived that in our present circumstances a change of government might throw all into confusion.

"It was in this state of things that a careful perusal of the papers containing an account of the conferences between the King's ministers and the Queen's law-officers suggested to me the expedient of which I had every reason to expect the success. The law-officers had not originally included the restoration of the Queen's name to the Liturgy, as any one of the chief particulars of her claims; and when they did mention this restoration, they declared that it was asked as a recognition of her rights and a vindication of her character: and then they suggested that if it could not be granted in substance, an equivalent might be found for it; such e. g. as her being introduced into any of the Courts on the continent. This it was that constituted the ground of my hopes. It appeared to me that an Address of the

House of Commons, assuring her that her giving way would not be construed into any wish to shrink from inquiry, but only to indicate afresh the disposition she had already expressed to sacrifice her own wishes and feelings to the declared sense of the House of Commons, especially if this Address should receive the assent of a large majority, would be as good an equivalent as that which the law-officers had specified. In fact I had every reason to believe her Majesty would have acquiesced, but for circumstances which I would rather state to you in person than by letter. Give me credit however for not assuring you on light grounds, that the Queen's chief law-officer recommended that acquiescence. You yourself must have observed in the newspapers that some of the chief opposition members in both Houses maintained that, whether my motion should be accepted or rejected, it was impossible that the inquiry could be prosecuted. This was a sad obstacle; since undoubtedly I hoped that the Queen's comparing her situation in the two opposite alternatives would have led to my success. But after the Queen's rejection of our mediation, there could have been no hope of success in moving for the restoration of her name, and indeed I must own it would have been at that time an improper measure.

"Any one who has been so long as myself in public life must have lived in it to little purpose, not to be prepared to have his conduct misrepresented and his views misconstrued. I am not therefore surprised

that the great part even of intelligent by-standers do not advert to the suggestion of the Queen's law-officers, on which alone my motion was grounded; but consider me as proposing from my own mere speculation, that the Queen should consent to give way on the disputed question concerning the Liturgy. I shall be glad to hear from you from time to time, especially during the present very interesting state of the public mind. I remain, my dear sir, with cordial esteem and regard,

Yours very sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The failure of this attempt drew on him all the abuse he had expected; he was charged with trifling with the House of Commons and attempting to deceive the people. He had in his possession a triumphant answer to the charge in the positive engagement of the Queen's chief law-adviser. "She will accede to your Address," he wrote to Mr. Wilberforce, (June 22nd,) "I pledge myself." His influence was overborne by a less sagacious counsellor, and with "a political forbearance which," says the party whom it spared, "I never knew equalled," he suppressed this unfulfilled pledge, and bore quietly the groundless charge of an unreasonable interference. The secret of this quiet confidence is seen in the following letter to his family.

"I am often prompted by the injustice and unfairness of men, to look upwards, and to say to myself—well, the time will come, when He will make thy

righteousness as clear as the light, and thy just dealing as the noon-day.

"I got the nineteen Sunday newspapers once for all the other day, that I might the better judge of their contents; and assuredly such a collection of ribaldry and profaneness never before disgraced my library, and I trust never will again. Of course many of the writers honour me with a peculiar share of attention. But this will soon blow over, and by and by all the well-disposed part of the community will do me justice, and above all, *the Lord will protect*. This is as fine a summer's day as I ever knew, and I have been quite delighting in the garden. What a pity it is that you all do not enjoy it more! I never saw the weeping willow so fine as it is this year. I wish I could transplant myself to you and my dear children, who occupy their place in the group that my fancy draws of you all upon the sands. (Ask the boys if it be a good place for 'crabbing.') They will be delighted with the Isle of Portland."

Some friendly voices confirmed this judgment of his conscience. "Due gratitude," says one,[18] "cannot be expressed to you for what you have done." "The nation," he was assured by another,[19] "feels its obligation to you; or if it does not, historians will record it."

All negociation was now at an end. "June 26th. Ministers resolved to charge the Queen before the House of Lords, and give up the House of Commons Committee. I talked with Lord Kenyon and Cal-

[18] Lord Kenyon. [19] Rev. Charles Simeon.

thorpe, and rather agreed that nothing was to be done but to go on with the business, though I would embrace any creditable way of stopping it. Castlereagh moved to adjourn his proceeding for a fortnight. This gave opposition an opportunity of moving its adjournment for six months. I and others voted against opposition; not meaning to vote for a Secret Committee at all, much less specifically in a fortnight, but not being able at once to take a by-way of defeating a thing which might at any moment be revived."[20]

"If the case," he said, "must be inquired into, it will be better done in the House of Lords, which is a court of justice, than in this House. Even then however it will be long, painful, and disgusting, and, what in my mind aggravates the evil, parliament is not clear in the matter. We marry our Kings and Queens contrary to the laws of God and of nature, and from this source proceed the evils which I am now anxious to avoid. I am strongly impressed with a feeling for the Queen's situation in early life, and in what I lately proposed her advantage was especially intended."[21]

"I bought Cobbett's letter to me—very clever, but very mischievous, and full of falsehoods: wisely however (as of this generation) dissuading the Queen from going abroad. Then to the House of Commons, and heard a violent speech from Creevey, and another from Bennett, speaking of the Queen's ill usage when she first came to this country, and too truly, alas!

[20] Diary. [21] Speech, &c.

but where is the use of talking thus? Surely it can only tend to produce insurrection. I am glad however to hear that the coronation will be probably put off. Oh what a comment is all this on 'Be sure your sin will find you out!'"[22]

"I ought to be thankful," he tells Mrs. Wilberforce, "that I have lately felt a comfortable consciousness that I am in the hands of God. The 71st Psalm, which I learned by heart lately, has been a real comfort to me. Cobbett has been publishing a very clever letter to me, full, as you may suppose, of falsehood and mischief. Well! remember good old Luther, in worse times, when assailed by enemies who could burn as well as write."

He reasons on this passing odium as calmly as if it had attacked some one else. "I am doubtful about moving an Address on the Slave Trade. I greatly doubt the wisdom of bringing on these questions now, because the public mind is engrossed with the Queen's business, and because I am unpopular out of doors, though not in the House. What a lesson it is to a man not to set his heart on low popularity, when after forty years' disinterested public service I am believed to be a perfect rascal! Oh what a comfort it is to have to fly for refuge to a God of unchangeable truth and love!"[23]

It was another fortnight before he could rejoin his family. "I think," he writes to them, "it is good for the mind to feel a little solitary. It more impresses on me the true character of life, which has

[22] Diary, July 6. [23] Diary.

been to me too uniformly comfortable. Indeed I can say, 'My cup runneth over.' What a beautiful expression!—the passage struck me yesterday, when meditating over the 23rd Psalm in the garden." From Kensington Gore he wrote to one of his sons (ætat 18).

"My dear ——,

Are you particularly desirous of seeing the coronation show? If so, I will get you a ticket, for I understand from your mother, that you were to have had one from Lord Gwydir, who is just dead. It is in consequence of his death that I write to you. I suppose it is the finest of raree-shows, and, probably, if I were at your age, I should like to witness it.

"My late occupations and their result afford an example of the uncertainty of popular opinion. I was really acting the part of the Queen's best friend, and her legal adviser strongly recommended her to accede to our proposal; but she was over-persuaded into more violent counsels. And the language of opposition, especially Lord Grey, Mr. Tierney, and Sir Francis Burdett, was, 'Oh you may be sure you never can be prosecuted,' thereby taking away what must doubtless have most powerfully enforced her consent. Then, no sooner has she refused and the prosecution goes forward, than they say, government never should have admitted a compromise at all, but have prosecuted without hesitation.

"I know not whether you might clearly see the ground on which my motion rested . . But I wish you

from my heart not to become a politician. I hope you will act on a far higher level, and where the path, blessed be God, is clearer as well as more peaceable. And I am sure that you must endeavour to keep your mind from those false estimates of things which prevail in the world, and habituate yourself to those just and true valuations, which the word of God inculcates. Farewell, my beloved ——.

I am ever most affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

A few days later he wrote to Mrs. Hannah More.

"Kensington Gore, July 21, 1820.

"My dear Friend,

I am seldom so much provoked by irritations of the minor order, as by my real friends, especially if they are at all agreeable correspondents, when they gravely allege my want of time and eyesight, as the reason for their entire silence, or if not quite so bad as that, for their fobbing me off with a short letter. I beg you never to try the experiment on me again. In truth, the more numerous my letters of business or of boring are, the more do I need the cordial of an epistle from a friend. It is squeezing a cheering juice, the natural expressed produce of friendly affection, into a turbid, fermenting mixture, which really at this day teems with as many nauseous ingredients as Macbeth's witches' caldron, (the hell broth, as Shakespeare terms it,) while *green bag*, like the roll in the soup, floats in the midst of the

mess, imparting its pungency and flavour to the whole composition. Alas! alas! my dear friend, we are in a sad state. I own it does greatly shock me to see our rulers, even such of them as we have reason to believe have some sense of religion, exhibiting no feeling of the necessity of our 'humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God.' This I frankly own does alarm me, and that in no ordinary degree. At all events, my race is nearly run, though to you I must own that I am quite distressed when I contemplate the idea of retiring from public life, without even bringing forward more than one very important business, which I have long had in view. My dear friend, I speak the strict truth, when I say that I have wanted a little of your decision and alacrity. If that has made you sometimes appear in public less finished than you would otherwise have been, yet the good has been done. Your last letter really gratifies me much, from the proofs it exhibits of your preserving all your old good spirits and pleasantry.

"My family are at the sea, (Weymouth,) having been driven from Bath immediately on their arrival by the violent heat, which indeed arrived on the very same day, and quitted the place for the West Indies two or three days after their departure. I must join them as soon as I can. But really—No, I will not again touch on that hated subject, but tell you that in consequence of a very civil messenger from the Duchess of Kent, I waited on her this morning. She received me with her fine animated child on the

floor by her with its playthings, of which I soon became one. She was very civil, but as she did not sit down, I did not think it right to stay above a quarter of an hour; and there having been a female attendant and a gentleman present, I could not well get upon any topic so as to carry on a continued discourse. She apologized for not speaking English well enough to talk it, but intimated a hope that she might talk it better and longer with me at some future time. She spoke of her situation, and her manner was quite delightful. Farewell, my dear friend, may God bless and cheer you. This is the cordial wish and prayer of

Your affectionate Friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. A friend (a gentleman of course) told me this morning that out of curiosity he last night, between eight and nine, went to Portland Street, (22,) and found a most shabby assemblage of quite the lowest of the people, about fifty in number, who every now and then kept calling out Queen, Queen, and several times, once in about a quarter of an hour, she came out at one window of a balcony and Alderman Wood at the other, and she bowed to them; her obeisance of course being met by augmented acclamations. My friend entered into conversation with a person present who argued for the natural equality of man, and that any other of the people present had as good a right to be King, as George the Fourth. Once more, God bless you."

On the 25th the House of Commons adjourned for a month; and on the 28th he was preparing for his summer's flight. "To London, and wasted my day sadly. Castlereagh in Kent; Sidmouth, Devonshire; Bathurst, Gloucestershire — curious that all absent, and, I fear, most improper. Called on an independent-minded man of business, and talked an hour with him on public affairs. We agree as to danger. He sees no resource. Miss W. came and asked me to be her brother's executor for his West Indian negroes, whom he means, she says, to emancipate. I told her he must prepare them for it. Then I talked with Harry Drummond, and spent an hour in the pictures of our English worthies. Mulgrave's by Hoffner. Poor Pitt's a vile picture — his face anxious, diseased, reddened with wine, and soured and irritated by disappointments. Poor fellow, how unlike my youthful Pitt!"[24] His route to Weymouth took him to the house of another early friend, whose guest he had not been for many years. "So here is William Wilberforce going to visit Henry Bankes," his companion overheard him murmur to himself as he drove up to Kingston Hall, "and they are the only two of the old set of whom so much can be said."

On the 5th of August his wish had been to move with his family inland, "feeling robbed of the fair enjoyment of the summer when destitute of trees." But for his daughter's health he determined to remain at

[24] Diary, July 28.

Weymouth. "Your idea of a country residence," he told Mrs. Wilberforce, "is quite delightful, but

> 'If solitude makes scant the means of life,
> Society for me.'

"I have been treating this beautiful place and delicious summer's day very ill," he adds, "by sitting all the morning writing. But perhaps it is better not to indulge too great a relish for trees, now that I must so soon take my leave of them."[25]

His residence at Weymouth was soon interrupted by the threatening aspect of affairs. "The accounts from London are most alarming."[26] In this crisis his interference was requested by men of various parties. Lord John Russell led the way by a letter in the Times of August 5th, "which can hardly fail," says the editor, "to propitiate Mr. Wilberforce, so beneficent is the office which it assigns to him; so flattering, and we will add so just, the tribute both to his virtues and his power." "I address to you, sir, a public letter," began this appeal to him, "because you are a public man, on whom much depends. Although I generally differ from you in politics, I warmly admire your generous efforts for the welfare of mankind, and I believe you capable at this moment of doing a great benefit to your country. * * You, sir, and some others whose support is the sole strength of administration, are bound to interfere if they bate any thing of the wisdom and prudence

[25] To Mrs. Wilberforce, July 31. [26] Diary.

which you attribute to their general conduct.
In your hands is perhaps the fate of this country."

This step he thought most ill-advised from reasons which he thus imparts to Mr. Buxton. "You must ere now have seen Lord John Russell's curious publication. I presume it is genuine, though I only know it from its having been read to me from the Times newspaper this morning. It is somewhat singular that he should consider me as possessing so much power, and ministry as deriving so much benefit from my support, when at the same time he considers government indebted to the patronage of the Crown for the support it experiences from the House of Commons. I own I am concerned to see the letter, because it sadly obstructs the course of proceeding I had before meditated. It would have been very different if he had in private communicated to me his ideas." "At least," replied Mr. Bankes to a like communication,[27] "he should have sent to you a first impression of his letter, instead of leaving you to pick it up upon the sands of Weymouth among other jetsam and flotsam that might be cast upon the shore."

"I do not quite despair of getting the business put off," he tells Mr. Stephen,[28] "though it must be said, that Lord John's letter is a sad obstacle in the way, and one which may perhaps be insuperable." . . "My project was to urge the King to go to the House of Lords, and declare he gives up his own wishes to the

[27] Henry Bankes Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq. Aug. 16.
[28] Aug. 8.

gratifying of his people."[29] .. "But how could he hope that I should prevail on the King to accept my mediation, as that of a neutral man, when publicly called upon to come forward by one of the strongest partisans of the opposition?"

"I am divided between the fear on the one hand of neglecting some measure, which by the blessing of God might be the means of arresting our progress into that abyss to which we seem gradually but too surely advancing, and on the other of appearing conceitedly to think of myself more highly than I ought to think, and of thereby injuring the interests of religion. My situation would be very painful if religious principles I hope in part, but still more natural temper and habit, had not lessened the sensibility of my feelings on all terrestrial things. Yet to be told before all the world, that on me and my conduct depends the fate of the empire, is enough to make a man anxious."

Such an address to an independent man from one who held that to "abandon party was to forfeit all political importance," was not a little curious. Yet the same appeal was made to him from many quarters, and with more propriety of manner. "I feel with you," he heard from Mr. Lamb, "all the objections you have stated to the publication of Lord John Russell's. Yet you will forgive me for saying that I cannot but think you would do well in returning speedily into the neighbourhood of London. If any thing is to be done, your presence and influence will do it."[30]

[29] Diary.

[30] Hon. William Lamb [Lord Melbourne] to William Wilberforce Esq. Aug. 10.

The day before this letter reached him, he had "decided that it may be well to be on the spot when the Queen's business is going to begin, that if any opening should present itself, it may be embraced. I go up to try if I can prevent the inquiry. Yet I feel deeply the evil, that so bad a woman as I fear she is should carry the victory by sheer impudence, (if she is guilty,) and assume the part of a person deeply injured. Oh the corrupted currents of this world! Oh for that better world, where there shall be no shuffling." [31]

"Pray for me," he writes back from London to his family,[32] "that I may be enlightened and strengthened for the duties of this important and critical season. Hitherto God has wonderfully supported and blessed me; oh how much beyond my deserts! It will be a comfort to me to know that you all who are, as it were, on the top of the mountain, withdrawn from and above the storm, are thus interceding for me who am scuffling in the vale below."

He found all thoughtful men looking forward to the future with alarm—"Lord Castlereagh appears even more impressed with the danger than Liverpool himself." But matters were too far advanced for any beneficial interference, and he returned after a time to Weymouth, where he was still followed by pressing applications that he should demand an audience of the King, or recommend conciliation to the Queen. One ardent friend, with more zeal than discretion, sent down a messenger "to fetch me up express, and meet

[31] Diary, Aug. 11. [32] Aug. 14.

him at Salt Hill to have an audience of the King. I positively refused. He had summoned S. and Lord H. from Hastings, who both came; he himself went to the cottage and conferred with General Thornton, and sent in to the King that he expected me. The King sent a very proper answer: That if he had conferred with me, it must be on some political business, and that he never talked on political subjects with any but his ministers."

Seeing therefore no present opening for usefulness, he remained with his family at Weymouth and at Bath, watching from a distance the advancing trial. "As for politics," he writes to Mr. Bankes, (Sept. 19th,) "you are likely to have heard from the Chancellor more than I know. He will confirm or contradict the report I have heard that the Divorce clause is to be given up. But what is government about, to suffer such a multitude of poisonous fountains to be playing in the great city? I have had a few of them sent me, and any thing more mischievously contemptuous I never read. The more I think of the whole business, the worse I like it; and though I am by no means clear I could have voted for the Divorce clause, yet when that part is withdrawn, the question recurs with augmented force—will it be worth while to undertake a process of so much danger, and permanent bad consequences to the constitution in its regal part, when all we shall get by it will be to say we have degraded her; while being the King's wife, she will be still regarded as the Queen? Alas! surely we never were in such a scrape. The bulk of the people

I grant are run mad; but then it was a species of insanity on which we might have reckoned, because we know their prejudices against foreigners; their being easily led away by appeals to their generous feelings; and then the doses with which they are plied, are enough to intoxicate much stronger heads than most of theirs." "I begin more and more to think that a change of ministers might afford the most probable way out of our present difficulties. Yet one must not be unfair to them; but, judging candidly, their conduct has been very ill-advised."

As the cause advanced, his prospects did not brighten. "Whenever I look forward," he says a fortnight later,[33] "I am quite sickened with the prospect. I do not like to think over it till it is necessary, because circumstances may so alter as to change the ground of reasoning. But you and I may think aloud to each other. How I wish you were here that I might take some long walks with you! We never are together except in harness. I wish to be your companion in the field, whether frisking in the meadow, or reposing under the trees." The weeks passed on at Bath, and he was beginning to look forward with no pleasure to the reassembling of the House of Commons. "Five or six years" seemed more than he could now look forward to with any probability of usefulness, "yet I should greatly like to lay a foundation for some future measures for the emancipation of the poor slaves, and also to diminish the evil of oaths. These things being done, how gladly should I retire! I am quite sick of

[33] To James Stephen Esq. Oct. 5

the wear and tear of the House of Commons; of the envy, malice, and all uncharitableness."[34] The progress of the Bill of Pains and Penalties greatly increased these feelings. "I had fully hoped that it would never come down to the Commons; but" he "now began to fear the contrary."[35] His mind was not made up as to his future conduct. "I am strongly impressed by a sense of the ill-usage she experienced on her first coming to this country. Nothing could be worse; and even the public letter the Prince wrote her was almost like putting her away."[36] "The present inclination of my judgment is strongly against receiving the Bill."[37]

In this state of feeling he hailed with no small pleasure its actual issue. "This morning the early coaches from London came in, men and horses covered with white favours, emblematic I suppose of her innocence, for the rejection of the Bill against the Queen, or rather for Lord Liverpool's giving it up when carried only by nine."[38]

"Bath," he writes[39] in better spirits than his late letters had exhibited, "is a sad place for interruptions. Calling is quite a business, and not a mere compliment; for many of my *visitees* are old folks, valetudinarians, &c., who keep the house, and keep their court as regularly as Queen Caroline will do. How much you must regret that you, being out of town, could not accompany Lady Fitzwilliam and the

[34] To J. Stephen Esq. Oct. 29.
[35] Ib. Nov. 3.
[36] To T. Babington Esq.
[37] To J. Butterworth Esq. Nov. 2.
[38] Diary, Nov. 11.
[39] To Lady Olivia Sparrow.

Duchess of Somerset, to congratulate her Majesty on her *honourable* acquittal! Seriously, for indeed it is a very serious subject, the matter has ended, if ended it is, which however I fear is not the case, better far than if the Bill had gone down to our House. Without exaggeration it might have occupied us just as long as the Queen's partisans were disposed to think it for her interest that we should be so employed, and one entire session would certainly not have sufficed; for we have no judges to whom doubtful questions of evidence might be referred, or even *ex-chancellors* whose judgment is allowed to decide as to admissible or inadmissible papers or questions; instead of which every individual member among us thinks himself as well able to decide on these points as the first lawyers in the land."

It was soon too clear that the matter was not ended. "The political sky" he thought "very gloomy. I hear from Canning of his resignation because he cannot properly remain neutral."[40] "Ministers are resolved to refuse the Queen the restoration of her name to the Liturgy and a palace. She is striving to keep the flame alive and to blow it to fury." "She throws out a threat of recriminating, a mode of proceeding which has been wisely reserved for the House of Commons. Even among us indeed she will not I suppose be admitted to recriminate formally, but she may through her spokesmen, both at the bar and in the House, produce all the effects

[40] Diary, Nov. 26.

of recrimination. I myself see Matt. v. 32 precisely in the same light with the Archbishop of Tuam."[41]

This storm was kept off for the present by the adjournment of the House of Commons, and Mr. Wilberforce was able to remain quiet in the midst of his family at Bath. Here a new blow distressed him greatly. On the 9th of December he heard from unquestionable information of the sudden death of Christophe; and with Christophe he well knew all the plans for the improvement of the Haytians, which had cost him so much time and labour, must fall to the ground. "I cannot mention Hayti," he says a few days later,[42] "without interposing a word or two concerning this same *tyrant*, as now that he is fallen it seems to be the fashion to call Christophe. If he did deserve that name, it is then compatible with the warmest desire in a sovereign for the improvement and happiness of his people; and I must also add that all the authentic accounts I ever heard of him have led me to believe that he was really a great man, with but few infirmities. Nevertheless I am not much surprised at what has taken place, for I must confess that the yoke of government might probably press heavily upon his people, and that he might carry on his whole system, both in introducing improvements and in reforming morals, with too much rigour. Again, the military discipline which he enforced, and the great army

[41] Letter to J. Stephen Esq.
[42] To the Rev. F. Wrangham, Dec. 26, 1820.

which he maintained, were necessary to resist the expected invasion from France; and I fear that all kings are apt to be too fond of arms and reviews—of course except the King of Great Britain."

"I regret," he said at this time to a friend, "that I did not more press Christian principles upon poor Christophe, and instruct him in the knowledge of a Saviour; yet I was afraid of losing my influence with him by going too far. I sent him books, and said what I thought I could, but I have been uneasy since I know not that a day has passed that I have not prayed for him. He has only been charged, as far as I know, with two faults; one, an overstrict enforcement of justice; the other, his being avaricious, and heaping together much money in his capital. But this was for the purpose of buying gunpowder from the Americans, in case France should attack him. He sent me over £6000[43] to pay schoolmasters, &c.; and I remember his giving a man, whose conduct he approved, 1000 dollars, quite spontaneously. He was a great man, intent on the improvement of his people, but he furnishes a striking instance of the truth, that by too earnestly pursuing a good object you directly defeat it."

Christophe's noble plans fell with him. "Every day something transpires," wrote a medical gentleman from St. Domingo half a year afterwards,[44] "to show the importance of King Henry to the Haytians.

[43] A part of this money still remained in Mr. Wilberforce's keeping, and was paid to Christophe's widow on her arrival in England.

[44] Dr. Duncan Stewart to W. Wilberforce Esq. March 6.

His greatest enemies now acknowledge that they never have had a chief whose powers of mind and body were so fitted for command. Had he reigned over a people untutored in the scepticism of modern infidelity, and uncontaminated by the licentiousness of French libertinism, Hayti must centuries hence have regarded his memory with veneration."

As the meeting of the House approached the political horizon became darker. Mr. Wilberforce returned to London with a heavy heart. "Pray for us," he said when he left his family, who for his daughter's health still staid at Bath; "pray for us who are about to attend parliament, and shall soon be in the heat of the battle." "I wish I had any thing to call me away to-morrow from the House of Commons. The question before us is a most perplexing one: a choice of evils. But how little these parliamentary affairs will interest me when I look death in the face—except having kept a clear conscience!" "I must now," he adds, "withdraw my mind from the scene of peace and kindness with which it is conversant when my eye is directed to No. 26, Pulteney Street, and occupy it with all that is of an opposite character. I have a most painful route to travel whatever course I pursue."[45]

On the 26th he "found the question changed by the motion of Lord A. Hamilton, from restoring the Queen's name to the Liturgy, to blaming the leaving it out. Not one man in fifty but thought it wrong, and still more foolish, to leave the name out, yet a large

[45] To Mrs. Wilberforce, Jan. 22, 1821.

majority voted for the previous question. That night I meant to vote for restoring her name, but was forced to go home by illness, though had the division come on a few days before, I should have voted against it, on the ground of the Queen's outrageously contumacious conduct. It is almost rebellious"[46] This concession he thought due to the religious feelings of the great bulk of the middle classes. He found that not only the political Dissenters, but even the Wesleyan Methodists prayed for the Queen by name, and "would not allow that she was prayed for at all, in the words, 'for all the royal family.'"[47] For himself, he had never viewed the omission as involving any religious question, sharing the sentiment expressed by Dr. Parr: "In the words, 'all the royal family,' I include the Queen."[48] But to perpetuate the notion that it was designed to deprive her of the benefit of the people's prayers, was, he thought, so paramount an evil, that on the 13th of February he supported Mr. John Smith's motion for the restoration of her name.

"This exclusion," he maintained,[49] "is a most unhappy circumstance, because it has been the means of introducing a political feeling into the Church. Every religious man has hitherto consoled himself with the reflection, that there is at least one day in the week, when he may forget all his low and vulgar cares, and dismiss from his mind the animosities which disturb the course of human life. On that day

[46] Diary. [47] Ib. [48] Life.
[49] Debate of Feb. 13.

the elements of discord ought to be at rest, and every recollection which creates disunion or excites a jarring sentiment should be, if possible, avoided. But at present this unhappy subject is brought under public notice every Sunday, and the wound which might otherwise be healed is kept in a state of constant irritation. Nothing can more tend than such a state of things to bring into discredit an ecclesiastical system sealed with the blood of martyrs, and from which the Dissenters themselves have derived all the advantages which they enjoy."

"It grieved me more than it ought," he wrote next day,[50] "to differ from many dear friends, but I really could not in conscience forbear to support the motion." "I felt extremely distressed, but was told I spoke well."[51] Two days later[52] he urges as an excuse for his silence, that "the subjects on which he meant to write were scarcely in unison with the rough and discordant notes" which had been "too commonly vibrating in his ears. You are such an antiqueenite that perhaps you will hold me almost incapable of the relations of peace and amity, after having supported the restoration of her name to the Liturgy. Here however I am not so serious as I was before. Yet there are those even whom I love, who, if they will not look at me with altered countenance, will yet feel real grief of heart; and I perhaps, even to weakness, feel full as much pain from the consciousness of grieving them. But we must not suffer such con-

[50] To Mrs. Wilberforce. [51] Diary, Feb. 13.
[52] Feb. 15.

siderations to affect our conduct, or even to bias our judgment. Yet it is one of the views in which a better world often presents itself to my mind's eye, and cheers my heart by the prospect, that then there will be no errors, no room for misconstruction, but all will at once recognise the kind intentions of others, and live in the clear and full light of unclouded love and confidence. Oh how trivial will then appear to have been many of those questions which we now contest so warmly!"

After the loss of the motion, he once more attempted to promote a peaceable adjustment of the question, by a letter which he thought would reach the King in private.

"March 6, 1821.

"My dear Sir,

After having been confined for a week to my chamber, I have just now heard a piece of intelligence, and that from no mean authority, which would have been a cordial to me had my nerves required a refresher. I mean that the Queen sent last night to say that she would thankfully receive the money offered her; and it was added, that she would now be glad of her name's being put as a matter of grace and favour into the Liturgy, because if she were abroad, the omission would operate so unfavourably on her. The prospects thus opened to us are really cheering. For remember, and that is what you and other friends have not sufficiently considered, that it is not that I, or any experienced man, ever sup-

posed the bulk of the people would long feel acutely about the omission of the Queen's name, but that the omission would tend to produce an estimation (a most false one) of the King's mind and motives, and a state of alienation of heart which would help to render them the more easy dupes of the artful, bad men who are trying to seduce them from reverence and regard for all they ought to respect and love. But now, my dear sir, what an opportunity for the King to establish himself in the good-will of the people, when it will clearly and indubitably appear to be the result of his own spontaneous grace! Really

'Deus hæc tempora,' &c.

I thought I would throw out this hint to you. I do really think there scarcely ever was such an opening.

"Never did you utter a more just word than that of prudence, which you suggested in a former letter. Good people are not always prudent people. The vices of the tongue, to speak honestly, are far too little regarded by those who we may hope do make a conscience of their words and works; yet how strong is Solomon and St. James, and above all our Saviour! I myself have often had this truth enforced on me. A public man of sixty-one and a half, for thirty years an intimate of a prime minister, must be incurable if he is a babbler.

"With kind remembrances to Mrs. ——, I remain,

'Ever yours sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE."

He soon turned to more congenial subjects. "Feb. 3rd. Grand Committee of African Institution at Lansdown House. Discussed parliamentary measures for the session."[53] It was mainly for this cause that he remained this winter near town, at the house of Mr. Stephen, whilst his family were detained at Bath and heard from him every day.

TO MRS. WILBERFORCE.

"Jan. 25.

"My day ever since breakfast time has been consumed by two peers of the realm; Lord C. had a good share of it, but I am told that by the clock Lord Harrowby was full two hours and a half with me, and I have barely time to scribble my letter to you; the bulletin report is—Well, I thank God. I have several visits to pay, and would you believe it, I am just now drawn into volunteering a dinner with Inglis, to meet Walter Scott.

"I enclose a letter from P., which breathes so friendly a spirit that I think you and the girls ought to see it, in order to do justice to his kindness. I love to make people like each other better, and I often regret the tattling system, which prevails so generally, and from which I grieve to say many, of whom it would be uncharitable not to think favourably on the whole, are nevertheless not exempt. It is indeed a striking instance of our natural self-deception, that persons who would quite shrink from the idea of committing most of those crimes which are

[53] Diary.

condemned in the word of God, think little of the vices of the tongue. But any one who is duly jealous of himself will always watch most carefully against the sins which are the least unpopular in his own circle, and certainly the great evil of what is called the religious world is *chatteration*.

"Pray let the girls see my letter. Young people ought especially to guard against this fault, and when I write to you now I consider myself as addressing them also. I beg you will write occasionally to —— and ——; their sisters also should write to them pretty frequently. I assure you both from my own experience and from that of others, that at their period of life the frequent recurrence of home associations, and of sisterly affection, has a peculiarly happy effect both on the character and manners. Can you send —— your newspaper after reading it; he has repeatedly asked to have one, and I don't like to send him an opposition paper? Return the Courier I send to-day, and if you have any convenient opportunity you might send me my Parkhurst's Lexicon. Farewell, with kindest remembrances to the dear girls,

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

His domestic character was truly remarkable It was not merely that the tenderness of his earliest affections was unchilled by a bustling public life, but that there was a careful thoughtfulness as to the effect of little things upon his children's characters which

seemed almost incompatible with his incessant occupations. This was now more observable when his sons were growing into manhood. For them he chose, as he had done for himself, (a far severer trial of his principles,) with no eye to personal ambition. His great wish was to see them useful clergymen, and leaving to themselves entirely the choice of their profession, he watched the little openings of domestic life to give to their minds the bias he desired. "My dear boy," he exclaimed at Bath seeing one of them read Cobbett with great interest, "do not be a politician; it is the most unprofitable of all subjects; it has been my business all my life, but I hope you are meant for something better."

"——," he says of another, "has been kindly received at Lord E.'s. I do not wonder at its having the effect of making him overvalue the worldly dignity of politicians and lawyers in comparison with the true dignity of the ministerial office. I greatly fear his estimate of things will be spoiled."[51] All his plans were laid thoughtfully with this intention. "If you have sons who are likely to distinguish themselves," he writes to a friend, "and wish them to go into the Church, I would advise you to send them to Oxford." The result was what he wished. Of his four sons, who came of a stock which for twenty-six recorded generations appears not to have produced one clergyman, he lived to see two in Holy Orders, and a third preparing for the ministry. His letters to them are full of the same spirit.

[51] Diary, Oct. 12.

TO A SON AT ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

"Saturday, March 10.

"My dear ——,

It seems very long since I heard from you. Yet I really trust your silence has proceeded rather from excess of occupation than from indolence; though I must say that to any one who has the full use of all his organs, there are intervals in the busiest life which afford opportunities for doing sundry little things, which to a man who has nothing to do, (let me correct myself, every man has something to do, I should say to a man who does nothing,) appear too laborious to be undertaken. At all events, never let my want either of time or eyesight be a reason for shortening, much less for omitting to write to me. Amidst the drudgery which the post imposes on me, a letter from my dear —— is a cordial that refreshes and revives me.

"But you have perhaps been expecting to hear from me in answer to your [question]. I cannot object to your plan of retiring to read, but I hope you will be very careful whom you select for your companions. Believe me on the credit of my long experience, that though Christians who wish to maintain the spiritual life in vigour and efficiency, (fervent, ζεοντες, in spirit, serving the Lord,) may without injury mix and associate with worldly people for the transaction of business; yet they cannot for recreation, still less for intimate friendship and society. With

the deep interest I feel for your eternal concerns, (oh how contemptible does all else appear in comparison!) I cannot but enforce on you this most important truth. I hope you keep steady to your plan of spending your Sunday properly, and not joining in parties on that day. Observation and my own experience have convinced me that there is a special blessing on a right employment of these intervals. One of their prime objects in my judgment is to strengthen our impression of invisible things, and to acquire a habit of living under their influence. Now this habit will manifestly be counteracted, not merely by gross outrages on the decorum of the day, but by whatever tends to secularize it, (if I may use the term,) to associate us with worldly objects and interests. Sursum corda is the Christian's Sunday motto. In the higher region to which he on that day endeavours to obtain access, he meets in idea that Saviour who died for him, and who still looks, we are assured, with the most tender solicitude and sympathy on all His followers, and with more kindness on none than on His younger servants. I think I must ere now have told you, that before I married, and indeed when I used to spend my Sundays alone, before I had the privilege of having two such Christian friends as the late Mr. Eliot and dear Henry Thornton, I used after dinner to call up in idea around me my absent relatives and friends, and thus hold converse with the objects of my affection. O my dearest ——, remember how much depends on you. You will I trust do credit to your name. But honestly more depends on the next few years than on

any other period of your life. You will be glad to hear that Tom Macaulay and his friend and quondam rival Malden have got two out of the three University scholarships. I think there were thirteen candidates, and they are always the first men in the University. * * * * *
I shall have you much in my thoughts and feeling to-morrow, especially from two to four o'clock. Farewell. May every blessing be your portion here and hereafter. This is the daily prayer of

Your affectionate Father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

TO THE SAME.

"Kensington Gore, Saturday, Feb. 24.

"My dear ——,

Notwithstanding my having written to you yesterday, I should have sent you a few lines to-day on the principle of paying you a visit, though but a pop-visit, on the Sunday, if a conference with the Duc de Caze and some other engagements had not consumed the whole morning. Indeed I account it a part of my regular Saturday's business to write to my children; yet as I have a letter to frank to you I will add a very few words to assure you that the mention which is twice in every day made of you in my prayers, will to-morrow be made with double enlargement and particularity. Your uncle Stephen and I were conversing seriously the other night, and we both expressed the greatly augmented sense of the im-

portance and value of prayer which a long life has produced in us. The idea of discarding what is called a particular providence from the lesser events of life, and acknowledging it only in the greater and more important, is not less unphilosophical than it is contrary to Scripture; and we both agreed that our own experience strongly opposed this false and mischievous persuasion. My dearest ——, may God bless and keep you.

Ever most affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

As the session advanced, he took part on some important questions. "Feb. 21st. I rather prepared for the coming debate; yet, as too common with me, expended nearly all my time over old accounts, which had only general reference to the subject, and made some little deposits of useful facts, but little or no immediate preparation. My secretary too late. It is a sad business to have my eyes in another person's keeping. Subject, the circular of the three parties to the Holy Alliance, Russia, Austria, and Prussia—the parties also to the partition of Poland—declaring their determination to suppress all revolutions, and applying the doctrine to the case of Naples. I spoke, and really thought it right to condemn such doctrine; and all without exception condemned it. It was very foolish in opposition to divide. 23rd. Dinner in support of the Refuge for the Destitute. Very kindly received. Duke of York proposed my health. Sat between Lord Liverpool and ——; the greatest man in

station, and the richest man for his rank, in the country. Former melancholy; latter affectedly vivacious. Oh how little does wealth give happiness! 27th. While walking in the Park this morning I met Castlereagh and Arbuthnot, and told the former that I was revolving the idea of an address on the principles and conduct of the three allied powers. Castlereagh laid in claim (my doing so in 1799 to Pitt [55]) to my hearing his objections first, and renewed his claim on a second meeting. March 9th. A meeting about the immolation of widows, and other Hindoo barbarisms. Resolved to have papers collected. 11th. On Sunday dear —— came to me, and spent three-quarters of an hour on his peculiar theological topics. I grieved to lose my time, but it was a trial of Christian principle, Rom. xiv. 1. His fault is that he reasons out his opinions, and then reads the Scriptures. 14th. Attending Sir Thomas Brisbane, Governor-abundus of New South Wales. 16th. Second reading of the Roman Catholic Bill. I was complimented on my speaking, though from turning away from the gallery, said to be inaudible there. I had thought the matter over in Stephen's garden for about an hour, and spoke near an hour." [56]

"It was a most able exposition of his views," says Mr. Buxton, "and the passage in which he said that though we had delivered the Roman Catholics from prison, we insisted on their wearing the gaol dress, was particularly admired." The rest of the week was occupied in "opposing Max-

[55] Vid. vol. ii. p. 365. [56] Diary.

well's Bill" for removing his slaves from Antigua to Demarara. "I voted and spoke one night for repealing the Malt Tax. Day passes away after day so rapidly, that life is sliding from me, yet little seems to be done. There is I hope no intentional misapplication of time, and we are to 'rule with diligence,' but I must retire from business for which not specially fitted." [57] His state of health at this time gave many indications that his parliamentary services must terminate ere long. Several successive attacks of illness made it impossible or dangerous for him to attend the House, and delayed his intended inquiry into the West India system to another year. "I scarcely dare tell you," he writes to Mrs. Wilberforce, "that at one time, thinking I was not likely to be able to speak before Easter, I was actually meditating the cutting and running system without delay; when I recovered, so as to allow me the hope of doing two or three important matters before my departure."

His secret thoughts on his recovery are full of gratitude to God. "What cause have I for thankfulness, that even when ill I scarcely ever experience pain, or distress of body or mind! But then I learn, or rather I re-learn, from this attack, two important practical truths: when I become ever so little incapable of quiet continued reflection I can only gaze at known truths, and look up with aspirations of humble thankfulness to the will of my unwearied and long-suffering Benefactor. I should be ungrateful indeed,

[57] Diary, March 31.

if I were insensible to the innumerable mercies which I have been receiving all my life long. But it is astonishing how little I feel the lapse of time. I forgot that I am now arrived at sixty-one years and a half, though never a strong man, and in 1788 in such a state of apparent weakness, that Dr. Warren, of unrivalled sagacity, said confidentially, (but it was soon told to my kind sympathizing friend Muncaster,) that I had not stamina to last a fortnight. How wonderful is it that I continue unto this day! But I shall probably have little warning: let me remember therefore Christ's admonition, 'Be ye also ready.'

"Again, how careful ought I to be not to let self-indulgence or inadvertence obstruct my usefulness. My powers of serving God (He best knows and ordains their effect) depend entirely on my health. Little things then, which in others are nothing, are in my instance important, since who has such motives for gratitude and active service as myself."

The following letter is of the same date.

TO LADY OLIVIA SPARROW.

"London, March, 1821.

"My dear Friend,

I beg your pardon for having been so dilatory in executing the commission with which you charged me. But the honest truth is, that the affair escaped me, and I assure you I often find humiliating proofs of this decay of memory. My friends must bear with my infirmities. I hear you are going with Millicent to Leamington; may it be with benefit, if, as I pre-

sume must be the case, the waters are the object. I myself have been unwell for about ten days; not materially, but enough to keep me from the House of Commons. In truth, that attendance is become very distasteful. To those who remember my first years in parliament, the difference cannot but appear extreme, in point of talent and eloquence.

"I hope —— will become one of the first stars in our, alas, darkened hemisphere (all our old constellations extinct). To say nothing of the older names, Lord North, Dunning, Wedderburne, Barré, there are no more Fox, Pitt, Burke, Windham; and poor Whitbread, with all his coarseness, had an Anglicism about him, that rendered him a valuable ingredient in a British House of Commons.[58]

"Yet to confess the truth, more talent was commonly employed in defending measures than in devising them. Very superior powers are seldom needed for the forming a right judgment in politics, and too often they are associated with qualities which operate unfavourably; but they enable a public man to congregate round him a number of followers, who feel themselves respectable from being the adherents of one who commands respect; and who in the parliamentary contests gives his friends the sense of superiority. Yet on the whole, with one or two exceptions, our public men are better than those of the earlier part of my political existence. But then we are in circumstances which must be confessed to be peculiarly distressing and difficult. Yet all the time,

[58] From an earlier letter.

as I often think, the great Disposer of all things is carrying on His own plans; and oh how much more truly important will many of these hereafter appear, on which the politician would look down with supercilious contempt, if you were to presume to put them on a level with the objects of his attention. We forget that the whole apparatus of civil government is mainly intended to keep society together in peace, and thereby to enable the religious and moral interests of the world to be promoted on a greater or a smaller scale, from the dimensions of a single family, or even a single individual, to those of a Missionary Society in all its varied and multifarious usefulness.

"I have been scribbling so fast that I scarcely know what I have written, but I remember that the very idea of your retirement, friendly peace, and comfort, produced an emotion of disrelish for the House of Commons' occupations to which I am just now returning. But my time is more than all gone. Farewell, and believe me with every kind wish and friendly assurance for you and Millicent, my dear friend,

Ever sincerely yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

After an Easter spent at Bath Mr. Wilberforce returned to London. "May 25th. Buxton's capital speech on the criminal laws, two hours and forty minutes—nobody tired—all information and sense." "26th. Meeting about the Address on the Slave Trade papers. Then formation of East Indian Civil-

ization Society." "June 20th. I moved my address on the Abolition, urging government to press the matter on foreign powers. Mackintosh spoke capitally; I did not at all please myself." "30th. Attended a meeting at the Thatched House Tavern, on the retrospect and prospect quoad Africa, &c. I did not do myself justice in not stating my illness and absence at Bath, as the causes of my inefficiency." Little was done during the remainder of the session. "July 12th. Had a few words with Lushington, who spoke against the Society for the Suppression of Vice." "Interview with Lord Bathurst and Vansittart, about apprenticing captured negroes. A long conversation with Lord Londonderry about French Abolition—he advised newspaper publications. Got Report of American Committee, favourable to the right of search."[59]

He was now retiring into summer quarters; "no slight labour, as you may imagine, when I tell you that I have to move the accumulation of near forty years." He had just sold his house at Kensington, ("I grieve inwardly I own at leaving it,") and determined upon settling in the country. "My wife and daughter wish it, and I hope I shall secure more time for my family and myself when further from London; it will give my children country tastes and occupations, and they are virtuous pleasures. Treated with such kindness as I am, it would be strange if I were not to be happy any where. Oh these things are trifles, mere

[59] Diary.

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trifles, and so let us feel them. Here indeed my temper and principles coincide."[60]

He settled first at Marden Park in Surrey. "We have taken for a year on trial a house about eighteen miles from Westminster Bridge, in which poor Hatsell lived for the last twenty summers of his life. It was once a fine place, and is one of the prettiest spots that I ever saw—without water—the form of the ground most beautifully varied, and the wood still fine, though a sad diminution of it was made to supply the demands of a former Lady Clayton, (the place is now Sir William's,) who was very fond of cards. The country also (Surrey) is one of the most beautiful I ever saw in England; the Lakes and parts of Derbyshire excepted. It is comfortable to me to have a house of my own and my books about me, instead of being in a watering-place as has been my summer habit for many years. But I shall find it a sad drawback if I lose thereby the pleasure of a few days' intercourse with you.

"How are you about Brougham's Education Bill? What think you of the state of the agriculturists and of their prospects? You really wrong me by not sending me some sense on these subjects. I shall say with Major Cartwright, Give us our rights. Did you know good H. S.? He was lately taken off by a consumption. His sweet wife, scarcely having ceased to be congratulated as a bride, is now a widow, and will, ere long, become a mother. Surely this is

[60] Diary.

an object on which our Saviour himself would have dropped a tear. O my dear Babington, let us live under the impression that the time is short, and be found doing our Master's business whenever we are called hence."[61]

This was the secret spring of all his conduct. "I am profiting, I trust, from the quiet life I lead at this sweet place."[62] Never surely was family religion seen in more attractive colours. "I only wish," said a college friend who had been visiting two of his sons, "that those who abuse your father's principles could come down here and see how he lives." It was a goodly sight. The cheerful play of a most happy temper, which more than sixty years had only mellowed, gladdened all his domestic intercourse. The family meetings were enlivened by his conversation—gay, easy, and natural, yet abounding in manifold instruction, drawn from books, from life, and from reflection. Though his step was less elastic than of old, he took his part in out-of-door occupations; climbing the neighbouring downs with the walking parties, pacing in the shade of the tall trees, or gilding with the old man's smile the innocent cheerfulness of younger pastimes. "The sun was very hot to-day, and the wind south, but under the beech trees on the side of the hill it was quite cool. Dined by ourselves, and walked with the boys in the evening."[63] 19th. "Gave ale and cricket to the servants, and all the family, in honour of the coronation. Thought it safer

[61] To T. Babington Esq. July 21.
[62] To Z. Macaulay Esq.
[63] Diary, July 18.

to refuse the invitation of a neighbour, lest my plan of quiet should be rendered more difficult." "How little," he said on another day, "does that child know how much it is loved! It is the same with us and our heavenly Father; we little believe how we are loved by Him. I delight in little children, I could spend hours in watching them. How much there is in them that the Saviour loved, when He took a little child and set him in the midst; their simplicity, their confidence in you, the fund of happiness with which their beneficent Creator has endued them; that when intelligence is less developed and so affords less enjoyment, the natural spirits are an inexhaustible fund of infantine pleasure."

Many of his letters speak of the pleasant days which he spent here.

"Marden Park, Aug. 1821.

"My dear Stephen,

Literally speaking, I was more than three-quarters asleep when I wrote to you yesterday evening. It is I suppose with sleep in the human body as with spirituous liquors in a frost, the extremities of the one and the surface of the other become stiff and torpid, whilst the heart remains awake and fluid; for my fingers were asleep, and marking the paper unintelligibly, when my mind detected their aberrations.

"I hope that from a better principle than vanity, I am vexed at your having been a second time here without seeing the place. Beautiful indeed as it is, I fully enter into your grounds for preferring the

Missenden country. It is rural nature with you; with us it is the manufactured article, too lordly to gratify the moral taste. But you must spend at least three or four quiet days with us. How striking is the Queen's death just now! May it impress the heart of the King with a sense of the uncertainty of human things.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

He loved thus to call his friends around him, and was never long without having some or other of them as his guests. "Sir George Grey with us—talked a good deal of the coronation, which all agree to have been the finest raree-show ever exhibited. But the moral eye seems to have been too much distracted, and it wanted the solemn effect which the mind contemplates in a King with his nobles about him, taking oaths of fidelity to his people, and their emotions of loyalty towards him."[64] "Your brother the General just gleamed in upon us," he wrote a few days afterwards to Mr. Macaulay,[65] "as we have been wishing the sun to do all this day, to give us a little light and warmth, but with the sun he rose this morning and pursued his course when we were all in our beds. He gave me much information concerning the French parties, more and more convincing me what an unprincipled race they are at Paris." "What a horrible account does Sir G. Collier's packet contain. These French slave-traders are the common

[64] Diary, July 27.

[65] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Aug. 8.

pests of mankind. Think of a company formed at Nantes, having twenty-four slave ships already, to take up the Trade when the Spaniards and Portuguese should relinquish it."[66]

In the promised leisure of the country, he meditated literary works of an extensive kind, and hoped to realize the wish of Mr. Babington, "that the evening of your days should shed a mild lustre on your contemporaries and on posterity, harmonizing with the great and important labours of your earlier years."[67] "My whole life of late has been consumed by letters, and by other business which leaves no trace behind. I must endeavour to redeem the time for some useful work. Though the complaint in my eyes has for some years prevented my acquiring knowledge, or even keeping up what I had acquired, yet I hope that I might be able to compose both a religious and a political work, which would not be without value. May God bless to me this scene of quiet. I have been dictating some French letters lately, and beginning others on my own subject. My health requires my being out an hour and half in the morning, when fair, though I commonly use that time for dictating. When I can, I like to spend an hour or two after breakfast in hearing some rational author attentively; or if not that, I dictate. In dressing lately, I have been hearing Lord Waldegrave's Memoirs—a humiliating picture of court intrigue; yet in another view gratifying, as it shows how a

[66] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Aug. 15.
[67] T. Babington Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq. July 14.

man like old Pitt may rise by the honourable exercise of his talents, without servility or much party trick."[68]

The execution of these plans was continually hindered by his public occupations. The West India cause exacted all his time. He was at once obliged to begin writing "letters to two members of the American Congress and to the Emperor of Russia."[69] "I am endeavouring to write him a public and private letter about the Slave Trade, and especially about the way in which it is carried on by the French."[70] Soon afterwards he had "proceeded a good way with the public letter, and had already sent a private one to prepare him for it, and to press the matter upon his conscience."[71]

Other kindred occupations followed. He sends Mr. Macaulay an extract from a Spanish newspaper, adding, "I must write to Torreno on the subject, and repel the mischievous and false assertion, that we are content to sacrifice our own West India settlements, provided we can also ruin those of other powers."[72] "For four or five days I have scarcely been able to look at my notes, or make progress in my letter to the Emperor. It is vexatious beyond measure to have my time frittered away, but my eyes are the chief hinderance. Oh that I were young and strong, then I might get up at five o'clock in the morning."[73] "You do not tell me what is your occupation during the recess," he says to Mr.

[68] Diary, Aug. 18. [69] Ib. Sept. 1. [70] Ib. Oct. 2.
[71] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Oct. 27. [72] Ib. Oct. 3. [73] Ib. Nov. 21.

Stephen.[74] "Is it Cobbett's answer to Cropper? By the way I greatly lament Cobbett's having manifestly offered his services to the West Indians. He is just such an ally as M. would desire; ready to assert without scruple, and invent facts when they are not in existence. Poor Christophe! I cannot help grieving at the idea of his character's being left to the dogs and vultures to be devoured."

He urged at this time upon Mr. Wrangham[75] a half-formed engagement, that he would "draw up some account which should tend to dispel those dark clouds of falsehood and misconstruction with which party prejudice has blackened the character of Christophe. Really he claims as of right a place in your Biography. My only doubt is, whether you could obtain sufficient materials. I have been reserving for some time a little piece written by a lieutenant in the navy to his mother, after having spent a week at Cape Henry. But Christophe's character deserves a much more elevated tone, as well as deeper views of human nature, and of the principles of civil society." "I have lately read whilst dressing Madame de Stael's Ten Years' Exile, and very clever it is; full of deep and yet witty remarks, though one cannot but be offended at the constant disposition to shine. I met in it with a curious instance of the prejudices which prevail even in liberal minds, and amongst people of our own party, against the blacks. She tells of Buonaparte's perfidy and cruelty to poor Toussaint, saying, No doubt Toussaint was a great criminal!"

[74] Sept. 12. [75] Aug. 16.

One heavy trial alone clouded all this summer. His eldest daughter still continued in a state which gave him much uneasiness. After one of her recurring seizures, he wrote to Hannah More.

"Marden Park, Godstone, Sept. 28, 1821.

"My dear Friend,

I was sorry to hear that your 'soul's dark cottage' had sustained another rude shock. But I trust it has recovered the effects of the concussion, and that though time-worn and shattered, it may yet for some years continue to shelter its tenant. We all of us have had notices to quit, if we would properly receive and profit by them. I wish, but I fear must only wish, that you could spend a few days with us in our country retirement. I have much to say, and more to hear, but my eyes forbid my writing. I could not bear however to forward the enclosed (sent me for that purpose) without a word or two. You will probably have heard, that my dear daughter has been very poorly again. She is I thank God a little better. But, poor thing, may her ill health be blessed to her, and then—it may be, nay will be matter for rejoicing. May we both be enabled to live more habitually with reference to the next world. Farewell.

Ever your sincere Friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

As the year advanced her small remaining strength was manifestly sinking, and on the 30th of December she breathed her last at Mr. Stephen's house, whither

she had been removed some weeks before, for better medical attendance.

"I have been employed," he tells Mr. Wrangham,[76] "for a long period in attending the sick, and at length the dying-bed of a justly beloved grown-up daughter. But the pain of our late trial has been abundantly mitigated by the assured persuasion that she is gone to a better world. It would have been delightful even to those who were not so personally interested in the scene as ourselves, to have witnessed the composure with which, in the prospect of speedy dissolution, our dear child, naturally of a very timid spirit, was able to pray that her parents might be supported under the privation they were about to suffer." "I shall never forget the tenderness, and faith, and love, and devotion with which, having desired all others to withdraw, she poured forth her last audible prayer for herself and us."[77] "Sustained by a humble hope of the mercies of God through her Redeemer and Intercessor, she was enabled to bear her sufferings with patience and resignation, and to preserve a composure which even surprised herself. On the very morning of the last day of her life she had desired a favourite female attendant to ask her physician, whether or not there was any hope of her recovery, 'but if not,' she added, 'all is well.' She expired at last like a person falling asleep—scarcely a groan, and not the least struggle. I am almost bound in gratitude to the Giver of all good to call in my friends to rejoice with me over such

[76] Jan. 18, 1822.

[77] W. Wilberforce Esq. to Lord Teignmouth, Jan. 3.

an instance of Divine goodness, and the consciousness of our dear child's being safe is a cordial of inestimable efficacy."

To Mr. Babington he opens still more freely all the feelings of his heart in the review of this affecting scene. "There was none of that exultation and holy joy which are sometimes manifested by dying Christians. But I know not that my judgment does not rest with more solid confidence on her humble composure and consciousness of her own unworthiness, with an affectionate casting of herself on her Redeemer and Intercessor. The day before she expired, she sent all out but her mother and me, and concluded some declarations of her humble hope in the mercies of God through Christ with a beautiful prayer addressed to her Saviour. And she had remarked to her mother that she never had before understood the meaning and value of Christ's intercession. My dear friend, I must stop—you are a father."[78]

"I have always thought," he says,[79] "that we should use such seasons for associating spiritual impressions and ideas with the concerns of common life." Such was now his practice. On the day of his daughter's funeral he was kept at home by the extreme coldness of the weather, and when the band of mourners had set out he went into his solitary chamber to commune with his God. "I went and saw the coffin. How vain the plumes, &c. when the occasion is considered, and the real state of humiliation to which the body is reduced! I must elsewhere note down the mercies and

[78] Dec. 31, 1821. [79] Letter to Zachary Macaulay Esq.

loving-kindnesses of our God and Saviour in this dispensation; above all, the exceeding goodness of giving us grounds for an assured persuasion that all is well with her; that she is gone to glory. When the hearse and our kind friends were gone, after a short time I came into my little room at the top of the stairs where I am now writing and engaged a while in prayer, blessing God for His astonishing goodness to me, and lamenting my extreme unworthiness. And indeed when I do look back on my past life, and review it, comparing especially the numerous, almost innumerable, instances of God's kindness to me with my unworthy returns, I am overwhelmed, and can with truth adopt the language of the Publican, God be merciful to me a sinner. Every one knows, or may know, his own sins, the criminality of which varies according to his opportunities of improvement, obligations and motives to obedience, advantages and means of grace, favours and loving-kindnesses, pardons and mercies. It is the exceeding goodness of God to me, and the almost unequalled advantages I have enjoyed, which so fill me with humiliation and shame. My days appear few when I look back, but they have been any thing but evil. My blessings have been of every kind, and of long continuance; general to me and to other Englishmen, but still more peculiar, from my having a kindly natural temper, a plentiful fortune; all the mercies of my public life; my coming so early into parliament for Hull, then for Yorkshire, elected six times, and as will be known hereafter when I am dead, though now

mistaken, my only ceasing to be M. P. for Yorkshire because I resigned the situation. Then my being made the instrument of bringing forward the Abolition; my helping powerfully the cause of Christianity in India; my never having been discredited, but being always supported on all public occasions. There would be no end of the enumeration, were I to put down all the mercies of God. My escape from drowning by a sudden suggestion of Providence. My never having been disgraced for refusing to fight a duel. Then all my domestic blessings. Marrying as late as 36, yet finding one of the most affectionate of wives. [Six] children, all of them attached to me beyond measure. And though we have lost dear Barbara, yet in the main, few men ever had such cause for thankfulness on account of the love of their children towards them. Then my social blessings. No man ever had so many kind friends; they quite overwhelm me with their goodness, and show the wisdom there has been in my cultivating my friendships with men of my own rank, and remaining quietly in it, instead of trying to rise in life myself, or to make friends among men of rank; above all, the wisdom of selecting religious men for friends. The great and noble now all treat me with respect, because they see I am independent of them, and some I believe feel real attachment to me. Then my having faculties sufficient to make me respectable—a natural faculty of public speaking—though the complaint in my eyes sadly hinders me in acquiring knowledge, and in writing. Then, almost above all, my having been rendered the

instrument of much spiritual good by my work on Christianity. How many, many have communicated to me that it was the means of their turning to God! Then all this continued so long, and in spite of all my provocations. These it would be wrong to put down, but my heart knows and feels them, and I trust ever will. And it is a great mercy that God has enabled me to maintain a fair, consistent, external course, so that I never have brought disgrace on my Christian profession. Praise the Lord, O my soul.

"And now, Lord, let me devote myself more solemnly and more resolutely to Thee, desiring more than I ever yet have done to dedicate my faculties to Thy glory and service."

CHAPTER XXXV.

JANUARY 1822 TO JULY 1823.

Winter at Marden Park—Address to Alexander—Session—West Indian—Mr. Canning—Motion for Emancipation still postponed—Addresses on Slave Trade—Summer at Marden Park—Lord Londonderry's death—Correspondence with Lord Bathurst—Liverpool—Mr. Canning—Autumnal tour—Cromer—Windham—Canning at Eton—Elmdon—Apley—Darley church—Robert Hall—Correspondence with Mr. Stephen—Mr. Bankes—Dr. Frewen—Mr. Buxton—He prepares to propose Emancipation—Witherspoon on Regeneratian—Slavery Manifesto—He presents the Quakers' petition against Slavery—Mr. Canning opposes skilfully—Suppression of Vice Society—Mr. Hume and blasphemy—His humility—Spanish negociations—Letter from Canning—Commits the Anti-slavery motion to Mr. Buxton—Diary—Greek meeting—Continental Society—S. Perceval and E. Irving—He opposes the removal of slaves from island to island—Mr. Hume an active supporter of Slavery—Rev. E. Irving—Hannah More.

On the 4th of January Mr. Wilberforce returned with his diminished family to Marden Park; where his recent loss, as well as his decreasing powers of body, tended to detain him. He had been "strongly advised to attend the House very little, and to dilute his parliamentary campaign as much as possible, by

departures to the country ;"[1] whilst his wiser friends were anxious "to form themselves into a cordon of defence to protect him from all manner of intrusion."[2]

But though his bodily strength was visibly impaired, the fire of his spirit was unquenched, and he longed to be still active in his Master's work. "I am sometimes," he told his friends,[3] "quite grieved at the idea of my probably not being able to do a little good yet before I quit the stage; and the 71st Psalm is strongly impressed upon me, especially the verse, 'Forsake me not when I am old and grey-headed.' Yet perhaps this is in part only another form of selfishness; and the better feeling that which prompts me to acquiesce entirely in the disposal of God. If my chief object be that His will be done, what signifies it whether it be by me or not? He can raise up instruments at will, and I may be serving Him more acceptably by cheerfully retiring and giving place to younger and more active men."

The main cause which stirred up these feelings may be traced in another letter, which shows in every line that bodily decay had left untouched the tenderness and ardour of his spirit.

"Marden Park, Thursday, Jan. 17, 1822.

"My dear Stephen,

Well may you desire me to return your son's letter. It deserves, whatever happens, to be kept

[1] Diary. [2] Letter from Dr. Chalmers to W. Wilberforce Esq.
[3] Letters to T. Babington Esq. and J. Stephen Esq.

safely as a cordial, to be resorted to when your mind may be grieved or distressed, and as a standing motive to thankfulness. How much more truly heroic is the conduct of a young female, thus patiently and quietly accepting from the hand of God pains the most excruciating, with the consciousness doubtless of the danger of death, than many of those actions which are proclaimed through the world by historians, and on which nations pride themselves! The quiet and unostentatious meekness with which the former sufferings are borne, and I may add the faith, and love, and hope, should be contrasted with the consciousness of being the subjects of observation to a whole nation in the world's heroes; and that as glory would reward their bravery, so infamy would be the sure consequence of their weakness. Your letter was a great relief to us, for we had heard there was cause for anxiety. Her good husband too! What a field is open for reflection on the nature and blessings of the institution of marriage, with all its domestic blessings! And how infinitely criminal is our conduct in interfering with the instincts and rights of nature, and counteracting the laws of God, by denying to the slaves the marriage-bond! I really think I must bring forward that subject if no other particular of their situation. I thought of doing this, I mean of bringing forward the state of the slaves in the West Indies, as long ago as 1780, when I wrote about it to James Gordon, who was going to the West Indies; and whenever I have thought of going out of parliament, the idea of leaving this great subject untouched

has given me *pangs* that have been very painful. But I must not trust myself on this topic. Do let us know about your daughter. I feel a confident hope she will be spared, yet not known without anxiety. My dear Stephen, I feel more about her for your sake. Indeed I should be a very brute if I did not return your excessive kindness to my dear child by a feeling for yours. I believe I have other matters to mention, but they do not occur.

"God bless you, my dear friend, and may we all meet in a better world, where there will be no more pain, or sorrow, or sighing, FOR the former things will have passed away.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

This "great subject" he did not "leave untouched;" one more effort closed his long parliamentary career. Its three last years were spent in giving to the struggle against Slavery that first impulse, which before he left the scene had secured Emancipation throughout all the British colonies.

He now returned at once to his address to the Emperor of Russia. "I am finishing a piece to be translated and circulated in France, if the new regulations of the press will permit, with a view of convincing the people in general of the facts charged against the Slave Trade, and thereby changing by degrees the public mind of that country. I am not so diffident as many. I expect no immediate decision in our favour, but I have a pretty full confidence

that the Slave Trade will not be carried on in France for twenty years, and when you have to do with a system which has lasted two centuries and a half, twenty years is not a long time for putting an end to the whole of the evil. I, and perhaps you, shall be gone out of this world. But the cause is making a progress."[4] So hard did he labour that he found himself in danger of "neglecting to prepare on Saturday evening for the following Sunday, being commonly kept late at letters."[5] The state too of his eyesight "greatly hindered his work;"[6] yet with his usual spirit he begs Mr. Stephen "not on this account to lessen your communications.

"It is hard on a man complaining of the numerous blanks that fall to his share, to take out of the wheel one of the best prizes, and really I know your hand so well that I read it without difficulty. Why to-day I have had twenty-two packets, but have read only yours and Lord Londonderry's. Lord Londonderry has gained something for us from Spain and Holland, nothing from France."[7]

Thus engaged, and with his family around him, he watched from his retirement the advance of public business. "Feb. 1st. Hearing the State of the Nation, a good pamphlet, evidently written by ministers. The part concerning foreign politics [manifestly by Lord Londonderry] provokes me by its statesmanly disregard of the internal happiness of nations.[8] 9th. The House has passed the Insurrection Bill for Ireland.

[4] To T. Babington Esq. Feb. 22.
[5] Diary.
[6] Ib.
[7] Jan. 29.
[8] Diary.

Hume voluble, and people afraid of slighting him lest their constituents should be angry. 14th. Blessed be God, Allen yesterday sent me word that the Spanish Cortes had enacted a severe law against the Slave Trade — [ten years' employment on public works]." "I quite long," he replies, "to be discharging some of the electric fire which you have accumulated and set in action too within me, and were I not restrained by the state of my eyes, I should write to all my friends before I closed them. I really have not for years received such welcome intelligence. Thank God for disposing the hearts of the Spaniards to this act of mercy. I really did hope well from them, and Torreno assured me in a letter he would do all he could."[9]

"15th. Hearing the newspaper debate on Sir Robert Wilson. He has been treated very harshly, and especially it has surely been ungenerous not to give due praise to his military services. On constitutional principles I could not have supported the inquiry. But I dare say when he was dismissed from the army many reports were believed of him, which are now disbelieved. March 4th. Two Lords of the Admiralty snuffed out; I always supported this, and am glad of it. I wish I had got through my Russian letter, that I might go to the consideration of African and such other parliamentary topics as are fitly my own." His work was now soon completed and translated into French, "spiritedly and well. But I have been obliged," Mr. Macaulay tells him, "to watch

[9] W. Wilberforce Esq. to W. Allen Esq. Feb. 13.

the translator very narrowly, on account of his *liberal* propensities, and he has a warmth of imagination, which requires the curb. 'Quelle langage; grand Dieu!' You cannot imagine how difficult it was to make him feel how inappropriate such an exclamation would be from your pen. I cite this as an instance.

"Of course the pamphlet must be sent to every member of the French Chambers, of the States of Belgium, and of the Cortes of Spain and Portugal. It makes 80 pages. The title stands as follows: 'Lettre à l' Empereur Alexandre sur la Traité des Noirs, par W. Wilberforce, Membre du Parlement Brittanique.' Would you wish any alteration?" He was now looking forward "to returning, by God's blessing, after the holidays with confirmed health to parliamentary duty."[10] This accordingly he did, and was immediately so hard at work, that at the close of the first week he breaks forth with the exclamation, "Oh what a blessing Sunday is! Interposed between the waves of worldly business, like the divine path of the Israelites through Jordan."[11] His own cause found him much employment. "March 19th. An Abolition interview with Lord Londonderry, as yesterday with Lord Liverpool. 26th. A contest is coming forward, he says, about colonial intercourse with America, Canada, and the mother country. The West Indians are much distressed certainly. 29th. At the House talking with people till half-past nine, when home, seeing no oppor-

[10] Diary. [11] Ib. March 17.

portunity of consulting Vansittart about his engagement that we should have an examination by the Board of Trade, yet now they are going to change the system without inquiry."[12]

He was in hopes of gaining some equivalent concession for the improvement of the negro population; but when the debate came on, things looked most unpromising. He found "the whole House made up of West Indians, government men, a few partisans, and a very few of us sturdy Abolitionists, William Smith, Buxton, Butterworth, myself, and Evans. I spoke, but not well; out of spirits."[13] Yet he did not despair, and on the following day the African Institution agreed to "stipulate for a really effective Registry Bill, and some terms for the poor slaves. It has got into a strange scrape by asking Canning for twenty guineas as a vice president, in addition to ten guineas originally given—a proceeding not warranted by the rules, any more than by common decency and common sense. William Smith, Buxton, and I, are appointed a small committee for waiting on Canning, and making the amende honorable. I have been preparing him to expect us."[14]

To his proposal of an interview upon the following morning, Mr. Canning answers—

"Gloucester Lodge, Wednesday morning, April 3, 1822.

"My dear Wilberforce,

Never surely was so splendid an embassy sent to make atonement for so small an offence, since the

[12] Diary. [13] Ib. April 1. [14] Ib. April 2.

mission of Ulysses, Ajax, and Phœnix, to apologize for the seizure of Briseis, who in those days was probably worth about £21.

"I am really very sorry, that Mr. William Smith, Mr. Buxton, and you, should have so much unnecessary trouble: but I shall nevertheless be happy to have the pleasure of receiving all three, on any account whatever, at the time which you mention; and Phœnix at any time, and as often as he will. I am ever, my dear Wilberforce,

Most sincerely yours,

G. CANNING."

He now left town to spend the recess at Marden Park, "riding" however "at single anchor" and when called by Mr. Stephen to take his part in an important consultation, "I will meet you," is his answer, "at Philippi on Monday."

TO ZACHARY MACAULAY ESQ.

"Marden Park, April 8, 1822.

"My dear Macaulay,

'Macbeth has murdered sleep.' And you who come, if I mistake not, from the same neighbourhood, are abundantly endowed with the same useful, though sometimes annoying power. You share it with Stephen, and to say the truth with another personage, which, though its voice is still and small, is yet such as to make itself heard—I mean conscience.

"Though engaged to stay here all the recess, yet

if any thing could be done for our cause, no obstacle should be allowed to stand in the way of my return to head quarters. I rather believe, however, that all the members of our committee will be out of town as well as myself, and that therefore nothing can be done till they come back again. The Houses are to meet on Wednesday the 17th instant, and Robinson's Bill to be read a second time on Friday the 19th. I am clear however, from what passed at the Thatched House, that the utmost we can get our friends to do on the second reading, would be to lay in a claim for exacting concessions in the committee, and the time for bringing these forward would probably be before the Speaker leaves the chair for the committee to be formed. I think, therefore, that the beginning of next week will be time enough for our interview with ministers. If we were to apprize them of our wish for a conference too long before, the consequence would be their telling their West Indian confederates, and these last would hold their private consults, and become more obstinate in resisting us. Thus far I am decided—that either I or Buxton shall move to attach the slaves to the soil. (Mackintosh of course bringing forward the manumission facilitating.) But I do really hope we may go further in our efforts, if not in our success. But depend on it, the enlightening of the public mind on this subject will be highly useful; and now is the time for using every effort for that purpose. I have read, or rather heard, the Duc de Broglie's letter with no little interest. What rascals (to speak plain English) this

Christian ministry consists of! I should like to know what Chateaubriand 'holds' of it. Farewell—I must stop.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

He was now "much engrossed by Robinson's Bill for opening the trade of the world to the West Indies, and keeping the East India sugar tax. We hope for some concessions to the slaves. I hope at least to get their annexation to the soil, and the removal of the preventatives to manumission. But I hear that the French actually mean to people Guiana with imported negroes, and to reconquer Hayti. Oh for poor Christophe! Yet I hope God will confound such villany and cruelty, and I think he will, laying together the signs of the times." [15] "I need not specify to you," he writes to Macaulay,[16] "what are the particulars which to me appear to be such, but I think what has passed indicates the gracious disposition of Providence to put an end to the enormous evils of the Slave Trade; and I own I am rather expecting that some convulsive and destructive spasms will accompany the violent death of this bloody monster."

On the 17th of April he returned to town and directly opened his negociations with the government. The House too now engaged him. "April 25th. Lord John Russell brought forward his motion on Parliamentary Reform. I half intended to speak, having thought over the topics an hour or two in the

[15] Diary, April 16. [16] April 12.

morning, but did not. It was past one when Canning sat down, after speaking quite excellently. Canning carried me home. April 26th. I am rather sorry that I did not yesterday explain the principles of my vote in favour of Reform; that it was to put an end to the moral corruption of elections in the smaller towns, where drunkenness and bribery gain the day."[17] He was now more equal to exertion and no longer spared himself. Mr. Canning whom he wished to take on the 10th of May to the anniversary of the African Institution reluctantly declined, because as his Bill for giving votes to Roman Catholic Peers came on that very day, he could "not afford the time that it would take to go to the Freemasons' Hall and back. Pray do not," he continues, "exhaust your strength or voice this morning."[18] At the very time when this caution was addressed to him he was writing to Mr. Macaulay.

"Friday, May 10, near half-past ten.

"I really am sorry that I could not write a concluding sentence" to the Report "without expending the only half-hour I shall have to think over the topics a little, in order to prepare for the meeting. I thought it was absolutely necessary for me to be acquainted with the Duc de Broglie's speech, so it was read to me. But a long operation it was, and now I have not yet gone to breakfast, and callers have come in and I am scarcely fit for reflection.

"Really however, my dear Macaulay, (I say it

[17] Diary. [18] To W. Wilberforce Esq. May 10.

quite sincerely,) you yourself can make as good a conclusion as any one, and you will not be expected so much to speechify. I have had very civil letters from Lord Harrowby and the Duke of Wellington, but they decline" [attending]. "Farewell,

Yours ever,

W. WILBERFORCE."

That day he was "late at the Institution meeting," and "then to the House," where he "cleared up a vile calumny propagated against Wynne, and tried in vain to speak on Canning's motion." His mornings were now occupied by the religious anniversaries, at all of which he this year spoke; though sometimes so much exhausted as to be forced reluctantly to own that he "felt unfit for public business." His standard was as high as it had been of old, when he was better able to throw off all the effects of labour; and he would not decide on public questions without applying to them the full force of his understanding. He actually condemns himself for not being "able to help sleeping through great part of Hume's speech about the Ionian Islands, and Maitland's conduct. I was not fit for undertaking to judge, so I retired and gave no vote." "4th. House. Debate on criminal law. Mackintosh good, but I sleepy. I meant to speak, and had some good topics in my mind, but I think want of spirits kept me silent."[19] Such entries mark the gradual advance of infirmity; and are strikingly contrasted with the undiminished strength

[19] Diary, June 4.

of his affections; on the very next day he "would not go to the House, because he conceived Sykes's motion would come on, and I would not take part against so old a friend needlessly, though I could not support him."

But it was not to spare himself that he consented to postpone until another year his great attempt for the West Indian negroes. "I think you are quite right," was Mr. Stephen's judgment, "as to this being an unfavourable occasion for bringing forward our case against the colonists. They have quite overlaid us with their intrigues, and have got some of our real as well as nominal friends committed against us."[20] This conclusion was enforced by the existing distresses of the planters—distresses increased by the depreciation of West Indian produce, but mainly caused by the inherent vices of a system, in which absenteeship was combined with slavery. It was no doubt well that his motion was delayed until colonial embarrassment had reached its crisis; or it would have been more difficult to prove that it was not the consequence of his attempt. Never was there a falser charge than that of this once prevalent cry. If the motion for emancipation had destroyed the security of West Indian estates, and so ruined their possessors, it must have affected not their annual rents, but the value of the fee simple of their property; whereas, in truth, it yielded no annual return, and for that reason only was unsaleable. It was not that the present system secured

[20] To W. Wilberforce Esq. June 2.

their profits, and that this system was endangered; but that, even as it was, they received no returns. Yet the first full pressure of these difficulties rendered this an inauspicious year for such a contest, as the temper of the colonists too plainly showed to be at hand, whenever parliament should interfere with the condition of their slaves. For this reason therefore the motion was deferred; and when thus postponed on general grounds, he looked forward with no little pleasure to resigning the first place in the contest to some younger man. He thought "that it was suitable for an aged Christian to show himself willing to retire, and let others take the more leading stations." "I wish therefore," he says,[21] "that Buxton or Whitmore should take the chief management of the Slave Trade concerns, and let me give occasional assistance as my indifferent health and infirmities will allow. Believe me I say this very sincerely. My spirits are low, and I feel quite unequal to the bustle and turmoil, which was nothing to me formerly. In any state, however, my dear Stephen, I am most affectionately yours."

Still it was judged right that something should be done at once; and two Addresses which he carried through the House of Commons paved the way to the discussions of the following year. June 15th. "I talked with Lord Lansdown about an Address in the Lords. He prefers an occasional mention. To the House. Abercrombie on the Scotch Lord Advocate's conduct made for near three hours one of the very ablest

[21] To J. Stephen Esq. June 18.

speeches I ever heard. But my Address not being finished, and being afraid of being too late, I returned home about eleven."[22] It "was not finished till about an hour or two before the House," and his "speech only then thought about:"[23] "but," says he, "blessed be God, He carried me through not discreditably." Such was his own humble estimate of all his services; but Mr. Macaulay heard his speech with delight, and tells him that the Baron de Stael, who was present, "thought it of the highest importance to have it well translated into French." "I send you," he said, "the account in the Times; I wish you could infuse into it something of the vivida vis, the ardentia verba of the speaker."[24]

His Address was aimed at the conduct of foreign powers. "Mackintosh very strong against France and the Emperor of Russia."[25] His own application had been courteously received by the Emperor, but it had produced no effect, except as it prepared men's minds for further measures. "Count Lieven had desired an interview" with him, "and told" him that "the Emperor, as a mark of his esteem, had sent him an answer under his own hand." But more effect followed the other Address, (July 25th,) which went to prohibit the introduction of slavery into our own new settlements in southern Africa. He had spoken of himself before as "sanguine in his hopes of extinguishing slavery at the Cape;" and after the debate his entry is, "the

[22] Diary. [23] Ib June 27.
[24] Z. Macaulay Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq. June 28. [25] Diary.

temper of the House was clearly favourable to the proposal, and we all came back in high spirits." "This was the best speech," says Mr. Buxton, "that I ever heard him make. There was a very thin House, not above twenty members present, but he poured forth his whole mind on the duty of extending civilization and Christianity to the savage and the heathen." On this night too he gave some indistinct notice of his further views for the West Indies. "Not I only," he said, "but all the chief advocates of the Abolition declared from the first, that our object was by ameliorating regulations, and by stopping the influx of uninstructed savages, to advance slowly towards the period when these unhappy beings might exchange their degraded state of slavery for that of a free and industrious peasantry. To that most interesting object I still look forward, though perhaps of late we have all been chargeable with not paying due attention to the subject."

With the beginning of the holidays he entered upon his usual country residence at Marden Park. His family and friends were gathered round him, and he was reading, conversing, writing letters, and composing with all his usual diligence and vigour. He began to keep a "time account," and watched over himself carefully to employ it to the best account. "To-day I began the plan, to which by God's grace I mean to adhere, of having my evening private devotions before family prayers. For want of this they have too often been sadly hurried, and the reading of Scripture omitted. I have therefore resolved to allot an hour

from half-past eight to half-past nine. It is a subtraction of the space to be allowed to business, but God seems to require it, and the grand, the only question is, what is God's will? The abridgement of my evening prayers has been a fault with me for years. May God help me to amend it, and give His blessing to a measure adopted with a view to please Him. Amen. Began to-day to keep a journal of time." [26]

He was soon deep in various books. "Ran over Cain—what diabolical wickedness! Looked into Swift's Letters—what a thoroughly irreligious mind—no trace of Sunday to be found in his journals, or Letters to his most intimate friends." [27] "I am going on with Thomas Scott's life in dressing. What a truly great man old Scott was; acting for so many years on the highest principles, not only above money, but above vain-glory, or any other of the idols of men! I always valued him, but now that his character is viewed more distinctly, he really appears to have been a Christian hero. I never saw a book which I should recommend so strongly to the constant study of a minister." "The grand point for imitation, and may we both attend to it," he writes to his eldest son, [28] "is his *integrity*. He was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile. No consideration of interest, gratification, or credit could make him swerve consciously a hair's breadth from the line of duty. This, depend on it, is the best of all signs. I have often remarked that it has always ended emi-

[26] Diary. [27] Ib. [28] Sept. 3.

nently well with those in whom it has been visible. Such a one was Lord Teignmouth. I know no one quality which I always recognise with such heartfelt pleasure in any persons whom I love." Lighter reading occupied the fragments of the evening. "Scott's new poem, Halidon Hill—very beautiful. I have been running over the Fortunes of Nigel, the best, I mean the most moral in its tendency, of any of Walter Scott's stories which I have heard, illustrating the ways of Providence, the character of men of the world, and their unfeeling selfishness; (though this is painted almost in too strong colours in Dalgarno. But making him so much the gallant gay Lothario may be most useful.)"[29] "It is strange how much Nigel has haunted me while reading it. In spite of all my resistance and correction of the illusion by suggesting to myself that the author may order events as he pleases, I am extremely interested by it. But I think it is partly because I consider it all as substantially true, giving the account of the manners and incidents of the day. Surely some parts absurd, as making the usurer's dry firm daughter marry the Scotch servant. Even the watchmaker forced. But some admirable strokes of nature and character. Hard on Charles I."[30]

In the midst of these wholesome domestic occupations he was startled by the news of Lord Londonderry's death. "I am shocked by it," he tells Mr. Stephen. "How strange is it, that though professing to live under the continual recollection of the uncer-

[29] Diary. [30] To J. Stephen Esq. Aug. 13.

tainty of life, yet when such an event as this takes place, we are as much astonished as if we had expected the man to be as sure of a good old age as of his actual existence! Poor fellow! I cannot tell you how I feel his loss. Never probably was there any one called away on the sudden, by whose extinction such a complication of threads and lines of human policy were at once cut short—full of his plans for preserving the peace of Europe, and maintaining the system of the mutual balancings and dependencies on which he so greatly valued himself. I do not see that at home the event is likely to produce any material effect; abroad the case is different. But, poor fellow, my chief feeling is for himself. It is indeed an awful occurrence."

The particulars of this tragical event had not yet transpired, but the next day supplied more distinct intelligence. "August 19th. S. brought a report from Croydon that poor Londonderry had destroyed himself. I could not believe it. The Courier however and several letters too clearly confirmed it. He was certainly deranged—the effect probably of continued wear and tear of mind. But the strong impression of my mind is, that it is the effect of the non-observance of the Sunday, both as abstracting from politics, from the constant recurrence of the same reflections, and as correcting the false views of worldly things, and bringing them down to their true diminutiveness."[31] "All the time that I have been writing," he concludes a letter this day to

[31] Diary.

Mr. Stephen, "poor Castlereagh has been in my mind. I never was so shocked by any incident. He really was the last man in the world who appeared likely to be carried away into the commission of such an act! So cool, so self-possessed. It is very curious to hear the newspapers speaking of incessant application to business, forgetting that by the weekly admission of a day of rest, which our Maker has graciously enjoined, our faculties would be preserved from the effects of this constant strain. I am strongly impressed by the recollection of your endeavour to prevail on the lawyers to give up Sunday consultations, in which poor Romilly would not concur. If he had suffered his mind to enjoy such occasional remissions, it is highly probable the strings would never have snapped as they did, from over-tension. Alas! alas! poor fellow! I did not think I should feel for him so very deeply."

Though now in comparative repose, he watched anxiously over the progress of his cause, and was sometimes engaged in consultations with the other Abolition leaders; sometimes for whole days in "preparing a most important communication for Lord Bathurst," or in corresponding with the other members of administration. He received "a satisfactory reply from Lord Liverpool," of whom he had demanded "as the head of the government," that the plenipotentiary of Great Britain at the approaching Congress might be "instructed by the Cabinet,"[32] to make the Abolition a point of leading moment. And

[32] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Sept. 15.

"if I could prevail on them to instruct our naval officers to take the slave ships of France, I would engage not only to defend the measure in the House of Commons, but to take it on myself as of my own advising." [33]

Early in October he was "urging Canning as" he "had done Lord Londonderry before, to obtain from the French government the fair use of the press for enlightening the public mind," and he soon afterwards received a note from the new minister, dated Oct. 2nd, which is docketted "Mr. Canning just in office. Answer about enforcing Abolition."

"My dear Wilberforce,

I have been already at work on almost all the points of your letter; I wish I could say with any sanguine hopes of success. But in a few days I will enable you to judge for yourself, by sending to you, (of course in the extremest personal confidence,) both what I have heard from the Duke of Wellington,[34] and what I have written to him upon Slave Trade matters since his departure.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING."

He wrote also, and sent through William Allen to Verona, a letter to the Emperor Alexander, seriously urging him to exert himself. "He does not I hope believe that we are satisfied with him on Abolition grounds. My letter, though civil in terms was frank

[33] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Sept. 19. [34] From the Congress at Verona.

in matter, and it plainly intimated that we should have no favourable opinion of his religious or moral character if he did not honestly exert his powers in our behalf." [35]

This intercourse caused him "much business, on which" he could "employ no eyes but" his "own." "Canning," he says to Mr. Macaulay, "has sent me a copy of a despatch from the Duke of Wellington, and of his own answer. But he has stipulated for secrecy in such strong terms, that I cannot without further explanation state the particulars even to you and Stephen." [36] "It has often struck me that we ought to endeavour to obtain the Pope's co-operation in our Abolition proceedings with the Roman Catholic powers. As long ago as when Harford was at Rome, he heard that the Pope had sent to Lisbon a nuncio favourable to our views. Could any thing be effected at Verona in this way? I lately wrote to Canning entreating his good offices for the Waldenses, of whose depressed and almost persecuted situation I heard from a gentleman who had resided in their country." [37] "What work," replied his correspondent, "there is for you still! I wish we had thought of the Pope before. I never once dreamed of his existence in all my musings on our affairs. He ought certainly to be got to publish a Bull. Can you not set Canning on this? He is a favourite with the Pope." [38] "I will try," is his rejoinder, "to set Canning on the Pope. The Duke of Wellington," he adds, "should consider that he owes us more as a

[35] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Nov. 20. [36] Ib. Oct. 21. [37] Ib. Oct. 19.
[38] Z. Macaulay Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq. Oct. 22.

diplomatist, because, as a military man, he did not press our cause as he might have done, when occupying Paris with his troops. A single word from him would then have produced not a cold, slow, reluctant promise, but a strong and positive assurance, from which they could not afterwards have flinched without great personal discredit. I really believe he wishes us well, but it may do no harm to remind him of our claims on him." [39]

He now "read through again Canning's papers, and wrote to him hastily." Most of his suggestions were adopted, and Canning soon returned to him the draught of a letter to Cardinal Gonsalvi with the assurance,[40] "I will take any steps that you wish, and that appear practicable, to obtain access for you to the press in France; but I look, for my own part, to some sense of interest, (if it can be created,) rather than to any compunctious sentiment, for the conversion of the French mob, as well as ministry.

"You argue against the acknowledgment of Brazil unpurged of Slave Trade, and are surprised that the Duke of Wellington should not be instructed to say that we will give up all trade with Brazil, if Austria, Russia, and Prussia, will prohibit her produce. In fair reasoning, you have a right to be surprised; for we ought to be ready to make sacrifices, when we ask them, and I am for making them; but who would dare to promise such a one as this without full previous knowledge of the opinions of the commercial part of the nation?

[39] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Oct. 22. [40] Oct. 31.

"Be assured however that the Slave Trade shall not be established by a new compact, even if it cannot be extinguished by one."

He had left home in the middle of September, and in the midst of this negociation was travelling from house to house, visiting many of his friends, each of whom in turn delighted to gather round him their own circle of acquaintance, whilst in addition to these claims of society, a tide of letters overtook him at each halt. Here was no room for idleness. "I thank you most sincerely for your visit," he heard from Mr. Buxton, with whom the series had commenced, "I shall disappoint myself if I do not gather solid benefit from it. I believe I told you how much surprised I was at your industry." His progress led him on to many of his earlier haunts; Elmdon, Rothley Temple, Yoxall Lodge, and Apley, "the house of an honest Tory," were all visited in turn; and many interesting notices are scattered through his Diary. "C. knew Canning well at Eton; he never played at any games with the other boys; quite a man, fond of acting, decent, and moral. Dr. Parr violent against him in public company; says, 'I know the interior of the man, and despise and abhor him.'"

From Cromer Hall he paid Felbrigg a visit, and in its library turned over with great interest many of the books which were "full of Windham's marks." "Windham's mind," he said, "was in the last degree copious, the soil was so fertile, scratch where you pleased, up came white clover. He had many of the true characteristics of a hero, but he had one great

fault as a statesman, he hated the popular side of any question." His companion quoted Pope—

> "So much they hate the crowd, that if the throng
> Go right by chance, they purposely go wrong."

"It was exactly so," he replied, "and I had a melancholy proof of it in the instance of the Slave Trade. When the Abolition had but few friends, he was all on our side, but as the nation drew towards us, he retreated, and at last on the division in 1807, he was one of the sixteen who voted against us."

"Whilst at S. sat three-quarters of an hour with Robert Hall, who quite himself. He eulogized highly Scott's life, and old Scott himself; especially a sermon he heard from him in Robinson's pulpit from 2 Pet. iii. 'Knowing I must soon put off this tabernacle as the Lord hath showed me.' 'It was a sermon,' he exclaimed repeatedly in a most animated way, 'quite above all criticism.'"[41] "L. off to Birmingham to hear Hall preach to-morrow; I should have liked it, but thought it wrong. In attending public worship we are not to be edified by talent, but by the Holy Spirit, and therefore we ought to look beyond the human agent."[42] "O. preached on Rom. vii. 'If I do what I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.' He did not join the first verse of chap. viii. with the text, and though not, I hope, intending it, was very dangerous in his doctrine."—"At Darley church, built, and I believe endowed, by Evans senior. Never shall I forget the impression made on me by his modest,

[41] Diary. [42] Ib. Oct. 19.

humble manner, and few words, when I expressed the pleasure it must give him, to be conscious that when he should be dead and gone, the people would continue to profit from what he had done for them."

Many of the letters written during this excursion are full of various interest. From Elmdon he writes to Mr. Stephen on the 11th of October.

"My dear Stephen,

We arrived here yesterday evening, I thank God in safety. How deeply it ought to impress our minds with a sense of the highly-favoured lot in life, which Almighty goodness has assigned to me and mine, to be travelling with my family from place to place, experiencing a most kind and hospitable reception from people of superior worth and respectability, and to be only embarrassed by the number and conflicting claims of the many friends who are pressing us to partake of their hospitalities. I often reflect with pleasure on the worthy families with which I have brought my children acquainted, and trust they will enjoy the benefit of these connexions for generations to come.

"I assure you, you have excited in me quite a longing to roam with you through the woods of Buckinghamshire, and it gives me real pleasure to think of the stores of the purest and best pleasures you there have within your reach. And this reminds me of J. I seldom have felt so much pleasure from any similar event; and really I have a personal interest in it, for

J.'s and her progeny, are naturally likely to be valuable friends to my own grandchildren.

"Farewell. God bless you, as He does and will my very dear friend. So wishes and prays,

Yours ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

From Apley Park he wrote to Mr. Bankes.

"Apley, Nov. 4, 1822.

"My dear Bankes,

The place from which I am writing is really well worth your visiting. I think it one of the first gentlemen's seats in the kingdom. High banks clothed with wood by the side of the Severn tell well of themselves; and the house, a new one not yet indeed finished, stands boldly on a moderate eminence, with grounds so much higher all around it as to place it in a valley. Then the rocks continually force themselves on the view by the hill-sides, and the vessels sailing up the Severn, together with the deer, cattle, &c. give life and animation to the whole scene. I was really charmed with it both in the evening and the morning lights. But I little intended when I took up the pen, to expend my own eyesight or your time, in a description of the beauties of Apley, for of all other compositions, the descriptive is I think the least satisfactory.

"You touch on the fatal close of Lord Londonderry's earthly course. I often think of it. Few

events I own surprised me more. I must say that the occurrence of the same catastrophe, both to Whitbread, Romilly, and Londonderry, has strongly enforced on my mind the unspeakable benefit of the institution of the Lord's day—for I don't like to call it the sabbath, as I do not quite consider it in the light in which it is viewed by many religious men. I am persuaded that to withdraw the mind one day in seven from its ordinary trains of thought and passion, and to occupy it in contemplating subjects of a higher order, which by their magnitude make worldly interests shrink into littleness, has the happiest effect on the intellectual and moral system. It gives us back on the Monday to the contemplation of our week-day business cooled and quieted, and it is to be hoped with resentments abated, and prejudices softened. Believe me, my dear Bankes, to be

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"To H. Bankes Esq. Nov. 4."

Various incidents in this excursion had revived more than one acquaintance which time had almost obliterated. "The Duke of ——— called on me, and sat for almost three hours. He and I came into life about the same time, though we have seldom met since. Oh what thanks do I owe to a gracious Providence which provided me with such parents, and guided me through such paths as I have trodden!" In two other instances this revival of acquaintance led to a correspondence of unusual interest. "We

have formerly conversed on these subjects," he says at the conclusion of a confidential letter on religious topics, "why should we not renew the intercourse? And though in the voyage of life our course has not enabled us to keep together as both of us I hope would have liked, yet now that we are both on our track home, we may keep company for a while, and renew our kindly salutations."[43] The other letter was to his college friend Dr. Frewen. "It is always with a sort of melancholy pleasure, that I address an old friend after a long period has elapsed without personal intercourse. The mind naturally casts a backward glance over the retrospect, and in the experience of all there has been some loss or another which renders the review affecting. These emotions have been this very day called forth by breakfasting with our old friend Carr, whom I had seen but once for above thirty years, and now I am writing to another old friend in very nearly similar circumstances."[44] Dr. Frewen's answer alluded to some coldness which he imagined had grown up between them, ("of which I was quite unconscious,") and led him to take a full and interesting review of his life since the time of their early intercourse.

"Elmdon House, near Coventry, Dec. 6, 1822.

"My dear Sir,

Not a single day has passed since I received your interesting letter, in which I have not wished, I may rather say longed, to answer it. I really am

[43] Nov. 6. [44] To the Rev. Dr. Frewen, Nov. 13.

impatient to state to you some, for it would take far more eyesight than I can spare to state all, of the sentiments and feelings you have called forth. But let me begin by expressing that strong confirmation your letter gives to my favourite doctrine, and I must do myself the justice to say practice, when we have to deal with any one of whom we are disposed to think at all favourably, of frankly stating every matter of complaint we conceive ourselves to have against him, instead of suffering it to settle on its lees, if I may use the expression, and acquire augmented strength and colour by being kept within our own bosoms. It is really true, that I was not aware of having exhibited any coldness towards you in my behaviour, and also that I have utterly forgot, if ever I knew, the circumstance in your behaviour toward me, to which you refer, as having originated in a mistake, and from which I am sorry to hear you suffered real pain.

"I am pressed for time and have been so much in the same situation ever since I got your letter that I have not been able to reflect upon it, or by calling up the recollection of long-past incidents to bring before me, if possible, the circumstances to which you allude. You therefore have my first thoughts, though I have had your letter for some days in my possession.

"Various are the emotions which the retrospect of my life is calculated to produce in me; but those of thankfulness for the wholly undeserved, and yet multiplied mercies and bounties of God are, I hope, uppermost. You cannot but remember, what I can never

review but with humiliation and shame, the course I ran at college, and during the three or four first years of my parliamentary life which immediately succeeded it. Yet in justice to myself it is only fair to state, that at least as much pains had been taken by my nearest relatives and guardians to make me dissipated and vain, and though they did not mean it, vicious also, as are commonly used to counteract these dispositions; and forgive me, my dear sir, if opening my heart to you with frankness, and trusting to your considering my letter as written in confidence of your secrecy, I add that even at college most of those very men who ought to have used both authority and influence (and of the latter at least I was susceptible) to root out these propensities, and to implant better, rather confirmed than abated them. I must do both you and Cookson the justice to exempt you in a good degree from this charge, though to be honest with you not entirely. For would not the golden rule have prompted you to use towards me the language of a friend, if not of a father? (My natural father I lost when eight years old, and my grandfather and uncle soon after I went to Cambridge.) Ought you not to have urged me to look forward, and even on principles of sound human wisdom, much more on Christian principles, to consider what must be the issue of the course of life I was pursuing, and of the choice I was making of associates and friends? That though while my youthful spirits should remain I might continue an entertaining companion, yet that I should ere long bitterly lament that I had suffered the years

and circumstances which supplied opportunities for acquiring useful knowledge, and even still more for cultivating and strengthening the intellectual powers, to pass away wholly unimproved? Ought you not to have reminded me of the great account I had t render of the talents committed to my stewardship, and to have enforced on me the base ingratitude, to say nothing of the guilt, of making such an unworthy return to the Giver of all good for all the uncommon blessings which had been lavished on me with such exceeding prodigality? (I allude to my having been born in England, in the eighteenth century, and not when a man of my weakly body would have been useless and contemptible if he had not been exposed in his infancy, to my having a handsome fortune, my being born in the middle rank of life, and my having, I hope, a fair proportion of natural talent, and a cheerful and not an anxious temper, one of the greatest comforts in life; but there would be no end to the enumeration. I may fill up the line with, &c. &c. &c.) You did not spend night after night at cards with me, but did you suggest to me the fate of the unprofitable servant?

"All this went on, with grief and shame I say it, till by degrees I came to myself; for to no one can the phrase be more justly applicable. This began in the summer and autumn of 1785, and was carrying on in the winter of 1785-6, and in the following spring, when blessed, for ever blessed be God, I adopted those principles, to which, though I am but too well aware very imperfectly, I have ever

since made it the great business of my life to conform my character, I should rather say my dispositions, and tempers, and conduct. Of course I then took a survey of the past and the future. Providence had placed me in a situation which I must say I still think one of the most honourable that any man can possess—that of member for Yorkshire. How was I to proceed? My religion taught me the duty of devoting all my faculties and powers as a debt of gratitude to my reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, as well as of reasonable service to my Creator, Preserver, and continual Benefactor. And I was to labour more abundantly than the men of the world, who looked only to gain or to glory for their recompence. For 'what do ye more than others,' was our Saviour's language to his disciples. You know but too well how sadly empty I then was; how utterly destitute of the habits no less than of the knowledge I ought to have possessed. My business therefore manifestly was, to employ as diligently as I could in study as much as possible of my recesses from parliament; and as I knew I could do far less in any house of my own, for many years I quartered myself for nearly all the time parliament was not sitting with different friends, who suffered me to breakfast in my own room, and live as much as I pleased the life of a student. Once I was with Cookson; (poor fellow, it is with a sigh that I write his name: he and his wife both gone and I left;) and ever after with Gisborne in Staffordshire, and Babington in Leicestershire. Thus I went on until I married in 1797.

"I have gone into this narrative because you are concerned in it. You will see at once that having no house of my own, except that either in or near London, from which I attended the House of Commons, I could not ask any of my old friends to come about me under my own roof—otherwise remembering our old habits of social intercourse, I think it is most probable I should have endeavoured to renew them—yet while I am writing, a new idea has suggested itself. I do not recollect having sent you a book of a religious nature which I published in 1797, just before my marriage; if not, I gave you reason to complain of me for failing in the performance of an act of friendship; for in truth, one of the chief objects I had in view in writing and publishing that work, was to explain to my friends the causes of the change which they witnessed in my 'goings-on,' (to use a coarse but expressive phrase,) and the principles which I could not but earnestly wish and pray that all whom I valued and loved should also embrace. Now if I did not send it to you, I really believe the omission must have arisen from forgetfulness. But it was an unfriendly omission, and I beg your pardon for it, and will repair the fault. I grant however, that though the interest I took in the well-being of my old friends was even greater than it had been before the change I have been speaking of, yet that from natural and obvious causes, we were not likely to be such agreeable intimates to each other as heretofore. There was no longer the 'eadem velle' and 'eadem nolle' in the same degree, and therefore

we were likely to retain full as strong a desire to SERVE such friends as formerly, but not to have the same pleasure in each other's society. But as you and I have never to my knowledge been in the same place, we never have had opportunities of seeing much of each other. Thus, my dear sir, I have explained myself to you without reserve, and before I conclude let me say a few words concerning that same publication which I trust you will still do me the favour to accept and peruse.

"It is not from any idea of its literary merit that I entreat you to peruse it. I am quite aware that it is much too diffuse and even tautologous. But I am more and more convjnced by subsequent experience, that the character and practices which are recommended in it, are such as the New Testament prescribes to us, and such as alone will bring peace at the last. You will at once however see, that my main object was to endeavour to convince my friends that the mere outward profession of Christian principles could not be all that was required, when such strong figures were used and expressive explanations given to describe the dispositions and affections which were to be formed in us here, in order to qualify us for a better world hereafter.

"As to the other points to which I drew your attention in my former letter, I can say but a very few words on them. It is very natural that I should not have formed a very correct idea of your political sentiments, considering our not having exchanged a word on the subject for between thirty and forty

years. I am myself decidedly convinced that PARTY is one of the chief evils which in politics we have now reason to regret. This it is, which in the opinion of many well meaning (though I do not think them rightly judging) men, renders governing by influence necessary; so that it has become a settled contest, whoever is minister, between Crown influence on one side and systematic opposition on the other. Of course I do not mean to condemn all co-operation of like-minded men, and I know that if I were to have made such an acknowledgment in a public assembly, the ready reply would be, Why what is that but party? It is certainly one of the innumerable cases in which the fault is in the abuse, in the excess of the thing, not in its nature.

"As to Parliamentary Reform, it would require more eyesight than I can spare to put on paper what I think on that head. But I doubt not you would concur with me in opinion that the bribery, of all sorts and forms, and the drunkenness, which attend our present system, are those evils which call by far the loudest for reform. I verily believe, and have long believed, the constituent body to be more corrupt than the representative.

"My dear sir, I must say farewell. May every blessing attend you and yours. I am truly sorry to hear your son is such a sufferer. However, perhaps he may mend as he grows older. At twenty-nine how weakly I was; whereas, by the blessing of God on a very peculiar system of management, which suited my case, I have for above thirty years past enjoyed

as much, not robust, but comfortable health, as most people; and have very seldom been unable to carry on my sedentary occupations. The regular use of opium for above thirty years, with attendants, has been the main instrument of my recovery. But I have been drawn into these egotisms by thinking about your son; for being myself a father, I can sympathize with Mrs. F. and you. And now, my dear sir, farewell. If any thing should bring you near any residence of mine, it would give me pleasure to see you. Cordially wishing you every temporal and eternal blessing, I remain, my dear sir,

Yours sincerely,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"Rev. Dr. Frewen."

In December Mr. Wilberforce returned to Marden Park, there to decide on the operations of the next parliamentary campaign. "For many weeks past," he complains,[45] "we have been paying short visits to several friends, each of whom has called his own circle in to welcome us, very kindly, but was it not Erasmus that exclaimed, Amici fures temporis."

While on his way he heard through General Macaulay, who was in attendance on the Duke of Wellington at Verona, "of the admirable zeal, perseverance, judgment, and temper," which the Duke had manifested in conducting what he calls "our business at the Congress. I am particularly pleased with the General's confidence in the Duke of Wellington's

[45] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Nov. 23.

plain-dealing honesty, against all the tangled web of the French Machiavellian manufacturers. Dieu defend le droit. I shall love all generals the better for it as long as I live, and so I hope will my children after me."[46]

"I am highly gratified by finding so much resolution and practical zeal in our good cause, in a man whose life has been spent for very different purposes, but who has been so signally honoured by Providence as the instrument of our national deliverance."[47]

"Be not uncomfortable on this account," wrote Mr. Stephen, to whom he had expressed his self-reproach at being diverted in this manner from an important object, "all will be over-ruled for good. God has not many servants, nor man many friends, whose only fault is the attempting more in their service than they have time and strength to perform; and therefore sometimes not doing the most important part of their proper work so well, as with a less grasping love, and more economized zeal, or better calculation, it might have been performed."

He now replied to Mr. Buxton's compliments upon his diligence, regretting that his efforts had not been better husbanded. His plan he stated to be, "to employ the evenings only in letter-writing, the mornings being given to something better meriting the name of study."[48] He was himself the last to perceive that the diffusion of his time in minor occupations was but

[46] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Dec. 2.
[47] W. Wilberforce Esq. to Mr. William Allen, Feb. 14, 1823.
[48] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Nov. 23.

the tax he paid for being the centre of a great moral system, and that his multifarious intercourse with men of all classes formed the ramifications of that power which gave an impulse to the age.

TO T. F. BUXTON ESQ.

"You intimated a high sense of my industry. Alas! my dear friend, truly is it said in Holy Writ, 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness.' You little know how I reproach myself for not having expended wisely and economically the many more years of health than from my bodily frame I could reasonably have expected to be employed on earth in my Master's business. I do not mean that I actually waste much time; for, honestly speaking, I am conscious that I do not; but I am sadly chargeable with the fault of not expending my time with judgment.

"I must not go into particulars, lest I at the same time give a practical proof, as well as instance, of the truth of the remark. But, briefly, I have suffered my epistolary correspondence to run away with far too much of it; and, during the hours which I have listened to a reader, I have not given the requisite measure of attention. Let me just mention as an old fellow, (NARRATIVE old age,) what may perhaps be not altogether useless, that it is a good plan for any one who, like myself, has different states of his mental powers, to have different employments ready, suited to those various states. I find myself equal to the importation of facts, and to the lodging of them in my memory, when I cannot work them up into any

fabric of strength or beauty—well then—I would take in (call it *bonding*) my raw materials; and make them up into a manufacture at some future period, when I could bring into full play my fancy, and my memory, and my judgment, and all, in short, of my mental machinery, according to the degree in which I possess it. I humbly hope that for many years it has been the fixed desire of my heart, to employ my faculties as well as I could, to the glory of God and the benefit of my fellow-creatures. But alas, I have been, and I still am, continually led into frittering away on comparatively speaking trifles, that time which ought to be doggedly reserved en masse for real work—solid, substantial, permanent work, vested labour, if I may so term it; and yet, in practice, the boundary lines between the trifles and the serious business are not always very clear, e. g. many letters are such as I think I ought not to neglect, on principles both of Christian charity and Christian courtesy. Two instances in point occur at the moment. Robert Grant's canvass cost me many mornings' penmanship, because from circumstances (renewing acquaintance with long-neglected friends, &c.) I was forced to write rather long letters, and with my own hand, if I wrote at all; and to-day, when I hoped to finish my letter to you, and to write to Stephen and Macaulay, &c. &c., a letter arrives which compels me to write to Lord Bathurst, to Sir Thomas Brisbane, and a friend in Van Dieman's Land, in behalf of a truly Christian and highly interesting family, who are at Falmouth about to sail for and settle in that Australian community.

"But alas, my dear friend, my want of industry is most exhibited, (to the Searcher of hearts, at least,) in my not duly availing myself of all opportunities of forming and strengthening the habit prescribed by the apostle, 'Whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father through Him.' We all are apt to forget that the great object of our lives should be to acquire that new nature which is to qualify us to live in heaven, or, in Scriptural language, is to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Now this new state is produced, blessed be God, in various ways, and we are never cultivating it more efficiently than when, under the influence of right motives, we are doing good to our fellow creatures, especially if our active services are attended with self-denial. But the formation of the right temper and character is the main thing still. God can effect His own purposes by His own agents as He will. 'They also serve who only stand and wait;' and indeed they often are proceeding in the same great work of cultivating and strengthening the right dispositions and tempers—humility, submission, patience, love, peace, joy, child-like affiance, far more prosperously than those who to the view of their fellow Christians may be abounding in all the works of faith and labours of love. Let this, my friend, be your grand work and mine, and to this end let our industry be mainly directed. One thing is needful.

"Now a gracious Providence has kindly allotted to us the far easier as well as pleasanter line of active

service, and let me assure you in a parenthesis, that I have often rejoiced of late years in thinking of my having you for an associate and successor, as indeed I told you. Now, my dear B., my remorse is sometimes very great, from my consciousness that we have not been duly active in endeavouring to put an end to that system of cruel bondage, which for two centuries has prevailed in our West Indian colonies; and my idea is, that a little before parliament meets, three or four of us should have a secret cabinet council, wherein we should deliberate and decide what course to pursue. I can scarcely say what pain it would give me, were I to be unable before I go hence to declare my sentiments and feelings on this head. I have often thought that some modifications of Burke's plan would be advisable. I used to think that, except for its not going far enough, it might be no bad plan. The very circumstance of its being Burke's, would so abate envy and silence the clamours against us as visionaries, republicans, insurrectionists, that it would on that ground be almost invaluable.

"But, my dear friend, here am I writing on the 3rd of December, and really it has been impossible for me to resume my pen since I laid it aside the other day. Both my wife and I are cordially rejoicing to hear of your enjoying a smiling Providence in your domestic circle. Poor dear Babington. His eldest daughter is just left a widow with six or seven young children, by the death of the Rev. Mr. Rose, a fine-looking young man under forty. He taken, I left. O my friend, how strange is it, that though so firmly convinced in

our judgments of the precarious tenure by which we hold all our worldly enjoyments, yet when the sudden death of any one whom we love does occur, we are not only grieved, but surprised, nay, almost astonished! Such is the moral obliquity.—I must stop. Ever, with kindest remembrances to Mrs. B., &c.

Your sincere and affectionate Friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Mr. Buxton informed him that he should be in town "by the 10th of Jan.," and expressed his hope that the "Congress on the subject would not be later. It is exceeding well for you, who have powder and ball, i. e. knowledge of the whole subject, and the power of projecting it with force, to be primed and loaded of a morning and fired off at night, but it won't do with me. I can do nothing in this rapid method."[49]

But no council of war was needful to decide that the first step in the new attempt must be taken by himself, and that the subject must be introduced to parliament and to the nation by the long acknowledged patron of the negro race. His friends urged him therefore "to record and publish his opinions as to the state of the negro slaves, the duty of improving it, and of gradually emancipating them. Indeed my conscience reproaches me," he says, "with having too long suffered this horrible evil to go on. We must now call on all good men throughout the kingdom to join us in abolishing this wicked system, and striv-

[49] T. F. Buxton Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq. Dec. 6.

ing to render the degraded race by degrees a free peasantry. Oh may God bless our attempt."[50]

"My dear Stephen,

If you lament your decayed faculties, and your present drowsihood, (as Thomson terms it,) how much more cause have I for such lamentations! I say it sincerely and seriously. Yet still what I can do I ought to do. But the complaint in my eyes is a sad hinderance to me in recovering lost ideas and facts. Now in filling my mind with them, and in warming and animating me, you would, I doubt not, do me great good. And I am one of those substances, like sealing wax and other electric bodies, which require to be warmed in order to possess the faculty of attracting objects, of covering and clothing itself with them. I cannot sparkle at all without being rubbed, and this would be effected by your conversation and speechifying. Yet I perhaps can revive the old impressions by meditation and looking at papers. Formerly I had several friends who assisted me to look out for intelligence, Burgh, Dickson, and others. Pitt used to call them my 'white negroes.'

"Farewell, my dear friend, olim hæc meminisse juvabit. I hope you do not shut yourself up the whole day. Your mind cannot preserve its tone, if your body is unnerved and sluggish. May God, who has inspired you with the love of justice and mercy, and the abhorrence of oppression, prosper your

[50] Diary, Dec. 27.

labours for the promotion of the one and the suppression of the other.

"With kind remembrances to your friendly circle, both in your own house and out of it, I am

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Mr. Stephen in his reply expressed his joy that he "resolved on a Manifesto. Let us have it as soon as possible, as our *mise en campagne*. Most willingly will I do all I can, and go to Marden Park for the purpose if you think that best. But most sincerely do I believe you would do better without me in all respects but one. My province would be that of the driver only; and yet I beg his pardon, for he not only drives, but lines out the cane-holes, and I believe you would also line out better for yourself. Nor is driving to me a pleasant occupation except in my phaeton in good weather. And then Mrs. Wilberforce will flog the driver every day if she thinks we do too much, (she gave me fair warning of it on Sunday,) and I shall flog myself if we do too little. But after all, I will go if you wish it and think it best."[51]

Mr. Stephen remained still at Missenden engaged in similar pursuits, but several friends assembled round their Christmas hearth at Marden Park; and long and deep were their deliberations, how best to shape those measures which were to change the structure of society throughout the western world. Mr.

[51] J. Stephen Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq. Dec. 31.

Wilberforce was setting steadily to the task on which he had resolved, although he found "many hinderances from having a house full of inmates. All my children and my grandchild are around me, (what cause have I for thankfulness!) yet I am resolved to sound the charge."[52] On the 1st of January he was "hearing Koster's plan of ameliorating the condition of the West India slavery as a prelude to emancipation. Very good. William Smith reading it. I am turning over old subjects to fill my mind, in order to prepare for writing my Manifesto. Alas! I must lessen my correspondence. On looking back through the last year, what else have I done but write letters? Lord, help me to glorify Thee more. I must select, and only write to those who may fairly claim answers. Yet Christianity requires courtesy. 3rd. William Smith off early to town. How full of good nature he is! What a lesson does he give to evangelical Christians! I never am with him without thinking of talis cum sis, utinam noster esses, not with a party feeling, but from Christian love. I never forget his principles, and grieve over them. 6th. I heard Macaulay's paper on East India sugar, and tried to finish my long-promised Preface to Witherspoon, previously to beginning my Manifesto."[53]

This was a task which he had undertaken at the request of Mr. Collins, a publisher in Glasgow, the friend and elder of Dr. Chalmers. His engagement had been to supply a Preface to Witherspoon's Essay on Regeneration. The title seemed to promise

[52] Letter to J. Stephen Esq. [53] Diary.

controversial discussion, but his sole object was to recommend the practical instruction which had made this work long a favourite with him; and "I purposely abstained," he said, "from using the term regeneration, or expressing any opinion concerning the correctness of its application." He was not a little discomposed at finding afterwards that his Preface had been prefixed to two of the treatises of Dr. Witherspoon. The "Essay on Justification," he says, "I have never even read, but I am told it is decidedly Calvinistic, and every year that I live I become more impressed with the unscriptural character of the Calvinistic system." "It is most worthy of remark," is the entry at this time in one of his memoranda, "that God reasons with man in Scripture on our own admitted principles. This passage therefore, Rom. iii. 6, which implies, that God's justice will finally be manifestly consistent with the condemnation of sinners, is most important. It even intimates that it would be enough to prevent any dispensation on God's part that it would be unjust: 'God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world?' And observe that various passages of Scripture prove that God has not one standard of justice for Himself, and another for us, but that He has the same standard as ourselves."

On the 8th of January his Preface was completed, and he at once "began the Manifesto. Preparing for Buxton and Macaulay, who came about four; I discussed with them on our plan."[54] "We must have a

[54] Diary, Jan. 11.

serious talk of the interior Cabinet, for the purpose of settling the measures to be recommended for preparing the slaves for the enjoyment of liberty. The Abolition of the driving system, with the introduction of religious instruction and marriage, and the facilitating manumissions, must be, I cannot doubt, our grand measures. But of all this we will talk hereafter."[55] In the mean time he reports progress to a friend.

TO THE LADY OLIVIA SPARROW.

"Marden Park, Jan. 22, 1823.

"My dear Friend,

I trust you give me credit for thinking of you much more frequently than I write. Such is the effect of the standing impediment to my being a good correspondent, arising from the complaint in my eyes, and from the necessary claims on them which must be admitted while I have any eyesight at all, that I seem to myself to fall into arrears with all my friends, and yet to be always writing up to the full of my powers. And while I can at all use my own pen, it is very disagreeable to write by an amanuensis; it is as bad as talking to a friend through an interpreter.

"But do not abstain from writing in order to spare my eyes. The letters I receive from friends bear a less proportion to my whole number, than the salt I consume to the food it seasons; and the epistolary, I assure you, is far more grateful than the culinary

[55] To Z. Macaulay Esq.

seasoning. So believe me, your letters are even the more welcome when I am overdone by the multitude of less acceptable correspondents.

"You kindly ask after my domestic circle. Of myself I thank God I can give a very good account in point of health, hitherto; just now I am not quite so well, but not I trust materially otherwise. But if you ask me how I have improved the long interval of uninterrupted health which I have enjoyed since the beginning of our last recess, I am quite shocked at the answer I feel myself compelled to return. I know not how it is, I really have never meant to be idle, yet I can find no results from my occupation. I am now only beginning an undertaking which ought by this time to have been finished. It is a Manifesto on the present state of the negro slaves in our Trans-Atlantic colonies, calling on all good men (aye, and women too, so you are not to be left out) to concur with me in endeavouring to improve their condition, in order to fit them for the enjoyment of liberty. Really when I consider the heathenish state in which those poor creatures have been suffered to remain for two hundred years, wearing out their strength in a far more rigorous than Egyptian bondage to a Christian nation; pity, anger, indignation, shame, create quite a tumult in my breast, and I feel myself to be criminal for having remained silent so long, and not having sooner proclaimed the wrongs of the negro slaves, and the injustice and oppression of our countrymen. Not but that I unaffectedly feel for those who inherit property of this sort. And it is one of my many subjects for gratitude

that this is not my situation. But I am glad to say that I really believe, if the masters will act reasonably, their loss need not be at all considerable, and they will possess their property by a secure, instead of as now, by a most precarious tenure. But let what I am about be a secret, I beg of you, till I tell you that there is no more cause for silence.

"We have taken a house in St. James's Place, for the ensuing session. Shall you not be in town occasionally? Farewell, my dear friend. With best wishes and sincere prayers for your happiness here and hereafter,

I am ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

This address cost him no little labour. "Jan. 26th. At work on my Manifesto, but I cannot please myself."[56] "I am become heavy and lumbering, and not able at once to start into a canter, as I could twenty years ago. Happily, it is a good road, and in a right direction. I have also been embarrassed by the quantity of my materials, and by the consciousness that, on the one hand, short general assertions would produce no effect which would not be done away by equally strong assertions of opposite positions; and on the other, that if I should go into particulars, I should be lost in detail."[57] "29th. I get on slowly. Music in the evening. To have friends in the house sadly consumes time, though no one loves music better than I do; yet the time is

[56] Diary [57] Letter to T. Babington Esq. Jan. 28.

short with me, and I must husband it."[58] There was no moroseness in this resolution. He was tenderly alive to all the softening charities of life. "How kindly I am treated by all my children! Never did any father experience more tender and affectionate assiduities, and such an anxiety both for my health and comfort. No one, surely, had ever such reason to be thankful for this great blessing, one of the very greatest in advancing years."

In such natural outbreaks of thanksgiving his full heart was ever pouring forth its gratitude. He could not mark in his Diary—"a sharp frost and fine day," without adding—"how charming are the varieties of our climate!" But in spite of interruptions, he was determined to complete his task. "Parliament meets to-day, (Feb. 4th,) but I am come out of town to finish, if I can, my Manifesto. Brougham's animated condemnation of the French, which censured also by all the House, and by Lord Liverpool, quite stirs up my blood, and makes me sorry I was not present. At work again to-day, but forced to occupy an hour or more in writing to the Duchess of Beaufort about Lord Charles Somerset, who has taken offence at the account given in the Times of my speech about the Cape slaves and Hottentots."[59]

Meanwhile his friends in London were at work. "We are to have a select party to-morrow at Lord Calthorpe's, purposely to talk over slavery," he heard from Mr. Macaulay. "If therefore you are drawn to town, you will know where the conspirators are assem-

[58] Diary. [59] Diary.

bled."[60] "I have had two long talks with Brougham, and have gradually opened to him our feelings and views. I cannot help hoping that we have gained him. He offered voluntarily to write an article on slavery for the very next Edinburgh Review."[61]

His own leisure in the country was not thrown away. "The further I get on in the case, the more important and heart-stirring I find it. Whenever, which is but rarely, I can get an uninterrupted hour or two, and am thoroughly warmed, I feel as if it was impossible for an honest man to resist us. But my eyes have done their *do* for to-day. Every blessing attend you."[62] He now came up to town, still "busy on his Manifesto," and "sent a good deal of his piece to the press."[63] "I am sadly out of heart about it, but I humbly trust I am acting agreeably to the will of God. Considering that when once unbagged, I should have no peace, I have not yet been at the House."[64] "I find my memory sadly weakened, and the want of eyesight produces ignorance of the affairs of the day, so that I must confine myself to my own subject. I am not fit to discuss general politics.

"I gave my name yesterday as a steward to a great dinner to the Spanish and Portuguese ministers, but did not attend, because I found some violent things might be said, which I could not then contradict, yet should not like to acquiesce in, for we must not go to

[60] To W. Wilberforce Esq. Feb. 5. [61] Ib Feb. 8.
[62] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Feb. 10.
[63] Diary, Feb. 16. [64] Ib. Feb. 17.

war. To-day—Sunday, is a blessed calm and abstraction from worldly objects. I have had a comfortable interval between church and dinner. O Lord, enable me to love Thee more, and serve Thee better."

Early in March his Appeal was published. He then speaks of himself as "busy for the first time on" his "Slavery Abolition work. My pamphlet is well liked, thank God."[65] No address was ever better qualified to produce that mighty effect which followed its publication. Its kindness and forbearance towards individuals, rendered its earnest expostulations irresistible. The fervour of the writer's natural manner was so happily tempered by Christian candour, and by the wisdom of age, that no heart could be closed when he spoke, "suavitate illâ, quâ perfunderet animos, not quâ perfringeret." Its perusal, a West Indian proprietor told him, "has so affected me, that should it cost me my whole property, I surrender it willingly, that my poor negroes may be brought not only to the liberty of Europeans, but especially to the liberty of Christians." The Baron de Stael wrote to him from the continent, "to express the unqualified admiration" with which he had read the work. "There are few stronger arguments," said he,[66] "in favour of the immortality of the soul, (setting aside revelation,) than the constant rise, brought in by the progress of time, in the mental powers of those who direct their course towards heaven. Indeed I cannot conceive how public opinion could resist an attack led on by

[65] Diary, March 15.
[66] Baron de Stael to W. Wilberforce Esq. Paris, April 21.

you, and I hope that having begun the holy struggle, you will witness the ultimate victory." Not less confident were the anticipations of success nearer home. "This addition," predicted Archbishop Magee, "to the noble exertions which you have persevered in making for the relief of that cruelly injured portion of the common children of the one great Father, will be followed with the blessing which belongs to such labours of Christian love."

The subsequent fulfilment of these predictions renders it difficult to appreciate the obstacles which for a time delayed their consummation. But the nation was slow to be persuaded of the cruel and debasing nature of a system which it had so long maintained, and which was linked with innumerable private interests. Mr. Wilberforce had learnt too much in his thirty-five years' apprenticeship in African controversy, to expect the chains of slavery to crumble under a single blow. "It tasks our historical faith," had been lately observed to him by an American correspondent, "to believe that you should have been almost singular not very many years ago in supporting opinions on the subject of the Slave Trade, which at the present period are common throughout the civilized world." The general prejudices in favour of colonial bondage he was confident would in like manner be ultimately dispelled, but he did not dare anticipate so speedy a result as the eager wishes of his friends besought; that "though it seemed too great an honour for one man to effect the Abolition of the Trade in negroes and their emancipa-

tion, he might yet live to see the fruit of his present labours."

In his present measures he was but following up his former steps. He had attacked the Slave Trade as a monstrous evil in itself, while he hoped that its suppression would lead at once to an improved treatment of the race of slaves. He had waited patiently for this result; perfecting the work of Abolition by international negociation, and guarding against smuggled importation by registering the slaves. But he waited fruitlessly; whilst the working of the registry showed beyond all doubt, that the negroes (elsewhere amongst the most prolific of the human race) were melting away under the driving system by a sure and rapid diminution. Self-interest therefore was not a sufficient corrective of the system, and delay was impossible. The time was at length come, when he must demand that from parliament, to which he had hoped that gradual improvements would have imperceptibly led on the planters. The nation must be pledged to give the negro freedom, before his master could be trusted to treat him as a man.

The second act of the drama was now opening; and on the 19th day of March he presented to the House of Commons a petition from the Quakers, who having been the first to protest against the Slave Trade, now led the way in the attack on slavery.

His present aim was to bring the subject forward, and having ascertained the temper of the House, prepare for such ulterior steps as it would bear. But the cause opened unpropitiously. "I thought a little

and looked over topics, but did not make the order of a speech. Fatigue rather stupified me, and I forgot the most important points. But Canning's generalship admirable, and his troops submissive. He let me exhaust my motions—that it be received, printed, &c. then merely asked whether I meant to make a distinct motion? None of the friends of the cause said a word. I, who had been thinking over the topics to be ready for reply, was quite confounded. All of us abattus. Never almost in my life was I so vexed by a parliamentary proceeding. I felt as if God had forsaken me, whom just before I had invoked; as if I had been wanting to the cause, &c. I could scarcely get to sleep, and was ashamed to see my friends, though they tell me the effect was better than I had conceived."

Mr. Canning had been a steady and consistent Abolitionist, but this new question involved him as a minister in many difficulties, and the influence of personal attachment gave his powerful mind a strong but secret bias to the wishes of the planters, and hence he was most anxious to put this trying question quietly aside. But though baffled at the moment, Mr. Wilberforce was not of a temper to yield the interests of a great cause to such impediments; and it was speedily resolved that this skilful resistance required them at once to bring the subject forward in a simple and definite motion. Whilst this was in preparation, he attended parliament as far as he was able; speaking on the most important questions of policy and morals. "March 25th. Hume sent

word to the Society for the Suppression of Vice, that he meant to attack their conduct. Sir Thomas Acland and I resolved to take up the business. I called at the office and got some intelligence, and then at the library of the Royal Institution, but in vain, to see Erskine's Speeches.[67] 26th. The House before five. Hume upon his petition, and spoke some time for Miss Carlisle, and very strong. Answered well by dear Acland. Then Ricardo, Attorney-General, Burdett; and then I and Wynne."

He defended the Society on the ground which he had always taken, and proved that public morals required the vigilance of such a body.[68] To Mr. Hume, who had asked tauntingly how blasphemy could be defined, he gave the same answer with which he had met a like inquiry from a publisher who tried to learn through him, whether the Attorney-General[69] would prosecute a work he was about to publish. "You are right," was his reply, "in believing me an intimate acquaintance of Sir J. Scott's; but this is not a question I can properly put to him, neither can you have any reason to complain of the restraints upon the press, now that Mr. Fox's Bill has given the law a more popular character, by subjecting it entirely to the decision of the jury." "That, sir, only increases the risk; the judges might be severe, but they followed fixed principles, whereas now if public feeling sets one way every thing may be condemned, if the other any thing may be published."

[67] For the Speech against Paine's Age of Reason.
[68] See vol. i. p. 132. [69] Lord Eldon, then Sir John Scott.

"Still," he replied, "I cannot help you, for I must honestly declare that if you desire to go as near as you safely can to blasphemy, I only hope that you will find that you have overstepped the mark, and incurred the punishment which you have tempted."

It was not without indignation that he listened to the shallow and "very mischievous speeches" of these pretended friends of liberty. "I had hoped," he said in private, "that —— had become a Christian; I see now that he has only ceased to be a Jew."[70] "I have heard," he declared, "some of their assertions with astonishment;" and with the authority of age he added, "I have sat many years in this House, and if the experience of public life may give weight to my opinions, I solemnly declare my conscientious conviction, that all which is most valuable to us depends upon our preservation of the sacred institutions of the country."

But these peculiar services were often interrupted by his increasing infirmities. "My lungs," he says, (April 15th,) "are affected, and my voice weak; so I am forced to keep the house, though yesterday Canning's explanation about the Spanish negociations. To-night the motion against Plunket, when, above all the House, it would have become me to move the previous question. I greatly regret that I could not go, but I must accustom myself to be willing to retire. Even a pagan could say, solve senescentem, &c. A Christian, considering himself the servant of God, does his Master's business so long as He signifies His will

[70] Diary

by action, and no less by retiring. I hope I have been acting on this principle (applying 'he must increase, but I must decrease') to other and younger men. And oh may I be enabled to walk by faith, not sight; and then all will be clear and easy, and not unpleasant."[71] "How cheering is the consideration that all events are under the guidance of infinite wisdom and goodness, and that we are hastening to a world of secure peace and joy!"[72]

The foundation of this graceful and easy retirement from the foremost place which he had so long filled, was laid in the deep Christian humility which gave its tone to the following letter.

TO J. S. HARFORD ESQ.

"House of Commons, April 25.

"My dear Friend,

Do not measure by the tardiness of my reply the force of the feelings excited by your last friendly note. The most interesting part I shall like to talk to you upon. O my friend, you struck a string which vibrates in my heart in full unison. When I review all my past life, and consider ever since it has been my general intention to live to the glory of God, and in obedience to His laws, what have been my obligations, and what ought to be the amount and the effects of my gratitude, what my means and opportunities of usefulness, what the scantiness of my performances, and with what alloy my motives have been debased; alas, alas, my friend, I have no peace, no

[71] Diary. [72] To J. Stephen Esq. April 8.

rest, but in the assurances of pardon and acceptance to penitent believers in Christ Jesus; and I adopt the language of the Publican, with the declarations of mercy and grace held out to the contrite and broken-hearted. What a blessed truth it is, that it is our duty to be confident in the undeserved bounty and overflowing loving-kindness of our heavenly Father! Farewell.

Ever affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Three days later, when the conduct of ministers upon the French invasion of the Peninsula was the subject of much angry censure, he was in the House, and took in great measure their part. "All history shows us," he concluded, "that wars are popular in their commencement and pernicious in their course. In my conscience I believe that the intentions of the government were fair and honest, and I applaud their pacific language, though I could wish they had assumed a higher moral tone."[73] The debate was twice adjourned, and as he did not wish to vote upon the question, he would have staid away on the succeeding nights, but an urgent note from Mr. Canning again brought him to the House for the conclusion of the matter.

"(Private and most confidential.)

Gloucester Lodge, April 30, 1823.

"My dear Wilberforce,

I have received your note, and in the same confidence in which it is written, I venture to say to

[73] April 28.

you, (for yourself alone,) that you have not unduly estimated the difficulties of my situation."

"But surely, surely in that case I have the stronger claim upon your justice. I am upon my trial to-day. Come and hear me! I had rather that you should 'hear and vote,' than that you should stay away, and leave your authority doubtful.

"What you said about the tone of the papers is quite misunderstood. I understand it; but I know others do not. I must refer to what you said; and I had a thousand times rather do so in your presence. But, if you mean to be just, you will be there.

Ever sincerely yours,

GEO. CANNING."

"April 30th. By Canning's special desire I attended the House to hear his vindication of the papers; but I was not satisfied, so I went away without voting at four in the morning."[74]

His own cause was now coming on. It had once already been partially discussed since his presentation of the petition of the Quakers, when a strong speech of Sir Robert "Wilson's had called up Bright, but Canning had interposed, and by checking the West Indians had stopped the debate." But this policy could not continue, and the country seemed disposed to favour him beyond his expectation. It is wonderful how people accord with us about the slaves; both government and West Indians. May God bless our endeavours. The country takes up our cause

[71] Diary.

surprisingly. The petitions, considering the little effort, very numerous."[75]

On the 15th of May, Mr. Buxton, to whom he had now committed the leading place in this great work, "began his Slavery motion about half-past five. He moved a resolution declaring Slavery repugnant to Christianity and the constitution. Canning replied, and moved resolutions proclaiming reform of the system, and specifying driving, punishment of females, Sunday work, and market. It was an awkward situation, but I could not learn what our friends thought, and I never got up so utterly unprepared, but D. G. I believe I hit the point. We certainly could not have divided well. The debate dragged on till one and more."[76]

The issue was not entirely what he had desired, though it was by no means destitute of promise. "For myself," (he said,) "I frankly confess that if the colonial legislatures would make the reform I should greatly prefer it. But how is it possible for me to expect that they will do it? Have we not large experience on this head; and does not all our experience show that they will not do this duty? And let it never be forgotten, as Sir Samuel Romilly used to exclaim, 'these poor negroes, destitute, miserable, degraded as they are, are nevertheless his Majesty's liege subjects,' and are entitled to as much, aye, let me remind my right honourable friend, by the principles of our holy religion, to more of the protection of the British constitution, because they are deserted,

[75] Diary, April. [76] Diary.

destitute, and degraded. But we now stand in a perfectly new situation. We have now an acknowledgment on the part of government that the grievances of which we complain do exist, and that a remedy ought to be applied. I will no longer detain the House than by expressing my confidence that we shall this night lay the foundation of what will ultimately prove a great and glorious superstructure."

The event of the evening formed the subject of discussion at the meeting of the African Institution on the succeeding day, and a party "dined afterwards at his house and talked over the cause." He thus conveys to one of his sons, who had left town reluctantly before the debate, his judgment of its issue.

"London, May 17, 1823.

"My very dear ——,

Now that the day is over, you will experience, if I may judge from my own feelings, no little pleasure from having practised a virtuous act of self-denial. You are rewarded also in another way; for the debate was by no means so interesting as we expected. Buxton's opening speech was not so good as his openings have been before. His reply however, though short, was, not sweet indeed, but excellent. I was myself placed in very embarrassing circumstances from having at once, and without consultation, to decide on Mr. Canning's offers. I thank God, I judged rightly that it would not be wise to press for more on that night. On the whole, we have done I trust good service, by getting Mr. Canning pledged to cer-

tain important reforms. I should speak of our gain in still stronger terms, but for Canning's chief friend being a West Indian—a very gentlemanly and humane man, but by no means free from the prejudices of his caste.

"I just recollect that this will reach you on the Sunday; allow me therefore to repeat my emphatical valediction, REMEMBER. You will be in my heart and prayers to-morrow, and probably we shall be celebrating about the same time the memorial of our blessed Lord's sufferings.

"May God bless you, my beloved ——. The anniversaries which have passed, remind me of the rapid flight of time. My course must be nearly run; though perhaps it may please God, who has hitherto caused goodness and mercy to follow me all my days, to allow me to see my dear sons entered upon the exercise of their several professions, if they are several. But how glad shall I be, if they all can conscientiously enter into the ministry, the most useful and honourable of all human employments! Farewell, my beloved ——. I am ever

Most affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

For the remainder of the session, which he spent chiefly in town, his bodily strength was taxed to the utmost, and his breakfast table—crowded sometimes by "a consultation on our Slave cause,"[77] sometimes by most variously assorted guests, "reminded him of

[77] Diary.

the old bustle of a Kensington Gore breakfast." His Diary and letters will now almost tell their own tale.

"May 16th. I much wished to go to the Greek meeting; but the danger of hindering our Slavery cause, consciousness that I might offend others whose meetings I had declined, and partly feeling very weakly, made me give it up and write an apology.

"21st. Continental Society. Young Perceva spoke most affectingly. Lord Rocksavage also. Rev. Mr. Irving as wild as a Pythian. I spoke also. Then Archbishop Magee—very kind and unaffected.

"22nd. Breakfast—the Armenian, Persian, young Perceval, Plenderleath, and one or two more. Like an old Kensington Gore breakfast. House—W. Whitmore's motion about sugar duty. None interested for the question but the East Indians and a few of us anti-slavers, and the West Indians and government against us; so that 61 a less majority over 34 than might have been expected. I spoke, and loud—hallooed; yet the reporters began with the usual observation of my low voice.

"23rd. Archbishop of Dublin called to breakfast with me—sat an hour and a half with me afterwards, giving me information about the Irish Church. House—expecting Slave Trade Consolidation business, and Game Bill; but Irish business came on instead.

"25th. Sunday. Morning, Lock, and staid the Sacrament. Walked home with Lord Rocksavage, S., and ——, and being overdone staid at home,

evening. Read, enjoyed, and I hope profited, from a sermon of Dean Milner's on 'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.' Private devotions, I hope, spiritual. Oh what blessings do I enjoy, what cause have I for gratitude!

"28th. Poor Pitt's birth-day. A Pitt Club dinner, but the anniversary become a mere party affair, so I don't go. To Paul's Cray, Simons's schools—Mac Niel sermon, very simple and good—was to have met Bishop Heber at John Thornton's, but too late home.

"29th. Friends at breakfast. Afterwards to National School anniversary—where Archbishop of Canterbury in the chair; Bishops of London, Worcester, Chester, &c. and a large collection of divines. I suddenly called on to second thanks to the Archbishop, but very kindly received, especially by Bishop Bloomfield.

"June 1st. The Lock—E. quite in his way, clear and strong, but his words stillatim.

"2nd. Prison Discipline Society anniversary, Duke of Gloucester in the chair. Calthorpe spoke very well. Mackintosh also cleverly. I was kindly received but spoke middlingly.

"4th. With Col. Barry and others to Lord Melville about the horrid indecencies in our ships of war; he gave us fair words. Then Lord Bathurst about Malta, the circulation of Bibles in Malta being restricted by the Roman Catholic bishop and priests.

"13th. I wished to go to the Christian Knowledge Society, to hear the valedictory address to Bishop

Heber delivered by Bishop Kaye of Bristol; but we had an appointment with Canning—we were with him from one till a quarter past three, and had, on the whole, a very satisfactory interview; he went into every point, and showed he wished to concur with us. Evening, House for Slave Trade Laws Consolidation Bill; but discussion on Rice's motion on the judges, and a debate on government's taking up such cases ordinarily and in preference. This, strange to say, supported by Denman. I spoke, and I think well, but with little effect. Canning most spirited, and on the right side, but not able to use the strongest arguments."

On the same day he wrote to Mr. Macaulay.[78]

"My dear Macaulay,

Buxton has promised to send you an account of what passed in our interview of near two hours and a quarter with Canning. All taken together, I may fairly term it a very satisfactory interview, because, though on the main point of all (that of the children) he intimated no concurrence, and though on the next important, (except what respects religion and marriage,) I mean the admission of Black testimony. . . Here enter—the Archbishop of Dublin, and he has kept me so long that I must merely add that I will thank you for your ideas on the questions put to me just now in a letter from Rush the American minister. I am sorry to say that I hear the state of Ireland is becoming still more serious. The speeches

[78] Jan. 13.

of the Roman Catholic leaders in Dublin are so very violent, that if they do not mean to excite the Roman Catholics of the south to actual rebellion, their language is such as to insure I fear that effect.

"Give my kind regards to all the circle at the Temple. What discussions you will have! I desire my friendly remembrances to that awful creature, (as poor Robert Hall called it,) the eagle. More seriously, remember me also most affectionately to dear L. and her children; but I have no sooner named one than I am prompted to name another; so I say, may God bless them all.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Even at these busy times his sons were receiving from him the most affectionate and thoughtful letters.

TO —— ——.[79]

"London, June 14, 1823.

"My very dear ——,

I scarcely need assure you, that however much I am occupied, I am never intentionally long without taking up my pen to write to you. There can be no business so important to me as the well-being of my children. But not seldom I am cheated out of my time; as I am at this moment. The Archbishop of Dublin was to breakfast with me, and I desired Mr. Wilson to come a little before, that I might introduce

[79] Aged 18.

them to each other, in conformity with a principle on which I have acted for many years, and which I recommend to you early in life, that of bringing together all men who are like-minded, and may one day combine and concert for the public good.

"Never omit any opportunity, my dear ——, of getting acquainted with any good or useful man. More perhaps depends on the selection of acquaintance than on any other circumstance of life. Acquaintance are the raw material, from which are manufactured friends, husbands, wives. I wish it may please God that you may have some good ones to choose from on your first settling at Oxford. T—— seems a very pleasing young man, but I own I covet a much higher praise for my sons; and oh that I could have reason to believe they were steadily and sturdily setting themselves to act on that beautiful description of the true Christian's character which we had two or three mornings ago in our family service, 'among whom ye shine as lights in the world!' O my dearest ——, what would I give to see you a φωστηρ εν τω κοσμω. The idea has brought tears into my eyes and almost disqualified me from going on with my letter. My dearest ——, aim high; do not be contented with being hopeful; strive to be a Christian in the highest sense of that term. How little do you know to what services Providence may call you! If, when I was at your age, any one had pointed to me and said, That youth in a few years will be member for the first county in England, it would have been deemed the speech of a mad-man. But I can truly

say I would as much rather see you a Buchanan, as eternity is beyond any given portion of time in the estimate of a reasonable being.

"But my time and eyesight are expended, and though I seem as full of matter as ever, I must stop—not, however, without assuring you how earnestly I shall pray for you to-morrow, (inter sylvas Mardeni,) that you 'may be strengthened with might in the inner man.'

"The young men of our day are in no danger of being called to the encounter of fire and sword—to burning at the stake; but then the consequence of this absolution, is their not being prepared for that milder form of persecution which they may be called on to face. But all may be done through prayer—almighty prayer, I am ready to say; and why not? For that it is almighty, is only through the gracious ordination of the God of love and truth. Oh then pray, pray, pray, my dearest ——; but then remember to estimate your state on self-examination not by your prayers, but by what you find to be the effects of them on your character, tempers, and life. But this opens a wide prospect, and I must stop. Most reluctantly, farewell.

Ever most affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The conclusion of this letter is a picture of the tone of his religion; fruitful in the liveliest affections, but tested unceasingly by its more substantial fruits. "I should wish to know," he said after hearing of a

happy death, "the man's previous character; for such expressions of confidence in the Saviour are not satisfactory to me unless they are accompanied by other marks of practical religion. I remember a lady of high rank, who had led a dissipated and I fear immoral life, and yet when suddenly attacked by death she desired to be left alone to pray, and seemed in full peace and composure."[80] But to return to the Diary.

"17th. Finding from the bill of fare, and from my letters, that I had no call to town, staid here (Marden Park) to-day also. Hearing House of Commons' papers on Suttees—also Essays on the Habits of Hindoos, and Friend of India.

"20th. Wrangham, &c. breakfasted—afterwards with him and Basil Montagu to see the late King's library at Buckingham House. Poor Carlisle the librarian cannot sleep for vexation. He advised strongly its not being taken to the Museum, but put up in Whitehall Chapel. House—presenting petitions—then King's library—Mackintosh spoke beautifully—Croker's strong and sharp ridicule of the taste of the British Museum trustees—carried for Museum.

"23rd. Brougham's speech quite thundering in the peroration—magnificent but very unjust declamation on great abuses of Irish justice administration.

"July 1st. Came from Tonbridge Wells, and intended to go home to dinner, but found that Hume's motion against all prosecutions on religious subjects was about to come on, so forced to stay at the House. Spoke, but seemed to myself dry and barren.

[80] Con. Mem.

"2nd. Took possession of our new house at Brompton Grove. May God bless our residence here.

"4th. House—Slave Trade Consolidation Bill—we wishing to prevent exportation to Trinidad, but beat.

"All the West Indians," he writes word to Macaulay, "were against us, and notwithstanding all we could urge, Canning was really convinced, I believe, that he was right in contending for the removal of slaves from island to island, not excluding Trinidad, whenever it should be proved that it would be for the benefit of the slaves. Hume took part strongly against us, and especially urged that the Privy Council's power of granting licences should be perpetual, and not be confined to three years, as proposed by Wilmot Horton. Canning has since consented that the power shall only last till 1826. We have a hope of obtaining a concession that the slaves so transported shall be adscripti glebæ."

There was the greatest danger of a new form of Slave Trading resulting from this measure, and those who were the most familiar with the state of the West Indies were its most strenuous opponents. "I know an Antigua planter," Mr. Stephen writes at the time to Mr. Wilberforce, "who has put the finishing hand to his ruin by borrowing money to buy back his estate and slaves after he had sold them, since he has found that the Act prohibiting their transportation had failed in this country, and that if he had these black counters to play with, he could make a set at West Indian rouge et noir, at the tempting gaming-table of Guiana.

"I suppose you know that Joseph Hume's brother has an estate at Trinidad, and are of course aware of Marryatt's interest in the question. I think it monstrous that they should be allowed to speak upon such subjects. They ought in decency to withdraw. Who would think of empannelling the swell mob on the trial of a pickpocket?"

As the holidays approached, he wrote to Hannah More.

"London, July 14, 1823.

"My dear Friend,

I am always overdone with business at the close of a session; and added to all my public occupations, we have been fixing; and bringing all my books, pamphlets, papers, &c. the accumulated stores of a whole life, into a habitation not previously fitted for receiving them. Marden Park was in one of the most beautiful countries eye ever beheld; but we were near three miles from church; we had no sheltered walk near the house, &c. And when people attain the grand climacteric, unless they be of antediluvian strength, they are compelled to make convenience the prime consideration in selecting a residence. Comforts become necessaries.

"You have doubtless heard of the prevailing *fashion* of resorting to the conventicle to hear Dr. Chalmers's late assistant, Mr. Irving. It is not merely the opposition members of both Houses, Lord Lansdown, Mackintosh, &c. that attend him; their political nonconformity might be supposed to endear

to them his ecclesiastical dissent: but the orthodox Lord Liverpool, the vindicator of existing institutions Mr. Canning, press into his meeting-house; and even with tickets you must be at the door an hour before the service commences, if you wish to get in without losing one of your coat pockets by mere mobbing. I have not yet been to hear him. Indeed I did not think it quite of good example to adopt the prevailing rage. It is literally true (I was told by one who was present,) that an opera frequenter related as a part of the green room's conversation of the last Saturday night, 'Shall you go to Irving's to-morrow?' It is with no little pleasure I have heard that he is a man not only of extraordinary powers, (though even once hearing him speak at one of our anniversary meetings satisfied me that he sadly needs the chastening hand of a sound classical education,) but of orthodox principles and personal piety, and I am assured too, of a fine, disinterested spirit. I thought that you would like to receive some certain intelligence of this extraordinary 'performer;' for such, with all his merits, he now appears.

"May God preserve and bless you. So wishes, and so prays,

Your sincere Friend,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Mrs. More's answer was such as might have been expected from a friend of Bishop Porteus and Dr. Samuel Johnson.

" My dear Friend,

* * * * * *

For the peerless northern star, Irving, I allow that he is a man of talents,—but—but he is as bad a writer as 'ere my conversation coped withal.' He writes like one of the old Covenanters in zeal, but oh, where is the clear but deep sense, the pellucid perspicuity of Baxter and of Howe? His censure of his brethren for confining their sermons to certain texts, and overlooking the rest of the Scriptures, and making the Bible a kind of party book, I was much pleased with. You will perhaps blame me for saying I shrink from many parts of the 'Argument.' That boldly prying into the awful mysteries of judgment over which the Bible has drawn such an impenetrable veil, I read with more pain than profit. I almost tremble at his familiar acquaintance with the details of the great Judge. It brought to my mind some lines, which I wrote in my copy book at eight years old. I have never thought of them since. I know not who wrote them. Les voici—

> 'Query was made, What did Jehovah do
> Before the world its first foundations knew?
> The answer was, He made a hell for such
> As were too curious, and would know too much.'

You will think me severe, but I write as I feel.

" I hope all your young ones are flourishing like the green bay tree. My best regards to all. Your eyes I am afraid will suffer from this interrupted and

ill-written scrawl. As I was scribbling, the servant came up in a hurry to tell me that there was a coach at the door with eight Arabians. I was a little puzzled till these Arabs proved to be eight Moravians, no formidable race. These holy sisters made me a kind visit.

"Adieu, my dear friend. Do not forget to commend me to God, and to the word of his grace.

Ever very truly and affectionately yours,

'H. More."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

JULY 1823 TO FEBRUARY 1825.

Summer excursion—Correspondence—Barmouth—Moral effects of a mountainous country—West Indian cause—Government measures produce an insurrection—Aspersions thrown upon him—Death of Mr. Grant—Letter to his son—and to Hannah More—Stratton Park—Return to London—Lord Eldon and Mr. Abercrombie—Cruelty to animals—Anti-slavery debate—Canning and Lord Nugent—Inflammation on the lungs—Letter to H. More—Return to business—Missionary Smith—Illness at Iver—Retirement at Uxbridge Common—Bath—Company—Christmas at Uxbridge Common—Doubt about leaving parliament—His feelings on it—Resolves to retire—Letters announcing it—Effect of the announcement—His place in the House—from eloquence—from character—Accepts the Chiltern Hundreds—New writ moved for Bramber—His feelings at the time—Last frank.

HAVING given up his tenantcy of Marden Park, Mr. Wilberforce was now looking out for some summer quarters, at which to fix his family. No Diary of the next few months was found amongst his papers; but his correspondence will supply the blank, and enable us to trace his steps. Shortly befo leaving London

he thus mentions to a son[1] the place upon which he had decided for the gathering of the family.

"Brompton, July 29, 1823.

"My very dear ——,

Your disappointment at the arrangement which prevented your paying us a pop-visit can scarcely have been greater than ours; but it is a great pleasure to me to think that we shall meet D. V. ere long, and spend some time together. It will then be your duty to take plenty of air and exercise; and in selecting Barmouth for our quarters I was principally decided by the consideration that the place would tend to render the duty a greater pleasure to you all. Barmouth, I understand, is very near the most ferocious and untamed of all the Welsh mountain-lions, though Snowdon may take the lead a little in mere bulk.

"In came —— about an hour ago. She speaks of your and ——'s kindness to her in terms which delight my heart; even the world, not commonly a just estimator of the value of character and conduct, always respects and admires family union and affection. May a gracious God keep you all, my dear children, mutually attached to each other; the ties of nature being strengthened, and adorned, and perpetuated by the influences of grace. Farewell, my beloved ——. Praying God to bless you, I am

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

[1] Ætat 18.

On his road to Barmouth he wrote to one who had shared his excursion to the Lakes, and who had been the most intimate friend of his eldest daughter.

"July 30.

"My dear ——;

Any one whom I love at all, I seem to love better in a land of mountains; and I understand that of all the Welsh lions, Cader Idris, beside the roots of which Barmouth is situated, if not the most respectable in size, is the wildest and most untameable in his properties. Yet certain recollections will chasten the vivid colouring of this glowing prospect, and though with a melancholy now become not unpleasing, because so enriched and animated by hope, will a little sadden the gaiety of the scene. Fancy would paint for itself a renewal of the expedition in which I rode by your side in scaling the heights of Skiddaw, or in which Southey skipped as light and elastic as a bird from stone to stone in tracking his path through Brothersdale, near Wyburn Water. There was a chapel and a school—not that school tyrannized over by that Queen Elizabeth of schoolmistresses at whose nod the terrified children trembled in Langdale. How naturally we are drawn into retracing our steps when we look back with interest on the road we travelled!

"I have lately been hearing the first hundred pages of Southey's Peninsular War, in which he gives you a bird's-eye view of the French principles, and character, and conduct under Buonaparte; and

they have rekindled in me that warmth of gratitude, which I own I think is far too little felt by my countrymen, even by the considerate and serious of them, towards the great Disposer of all things for having delivered us from the imminent danger to which we were exposed, if not of becoming the prey of that ferocious and unprincipled tyrant, yet of having our country the seat of warfare, with all the unspeakable and almost innumerable evils and miseries which we must in that case have endured, though we had been ultimately victorious. 'One of Buonaparte's generals, in the true spirit of his school, (Augereau, I think,) is said to have declared in speaking of this very subject, 'Let me land with 100,000 men in England, and I do not say I will keep possession of the country for France, but this I say, that the country shall be brought into such a state, that no Englishman shall be able to live in it with comfort for a hundred years to come.'

"What a fiend-like spirit! to contemplate with savage joy the pains of his inflicting, which should be felt by generations yet unborn. The mind that could cherish such a sentiment must indeed be enmity itself against God, whose nature and whose name is love. O my dear friend, what emotions are called forth by the very mention of that infinitely glorious and gracious Being, the sum of all perfection, who condescends to grant us even here a measure of His Spirit and nature, and of whom we are told that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Oh may we verify

our title to that blessed distinction, by our practical observation of the apostle's declaration, that every one that hath this hope purifieth himself even as He is pure. May we be enabled to prosecute our endeavours after this blessed state with more unceasing and strenuous vigour, and may we have reason hereafter to look back with mutual thankfulness towards each other on account of our having been mutually useful to each other in this greatest of all lines of service. Believe me to be

Ever very affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

In a postscript to the same letter, he alludes to some trifling presents, adding, "I own I love both to give and receive them from real friends, though from forgetfulness I am sadly apt to neglect the former. Real friends have already given me that cordiality of regard which makes all other presents appear as nothing, except as pledges and memorials of attachment; and in that view they have a great value, and a vivid, efficient influence."

Soon after his settlement at Barmouth he wrote to Mr. Buxton.

"Barmouth, Sept. 3, 1823.

"My dear Buxton,

Oh how much I wish you and yours were all at this place! If you have any passion for rocks and mountains here it might be gratified to the utmost of your desires. And there is another, and to your

friendly heart I know a still more powerful attractive, in the person of Mr. North the Irish barrister, who is staying here with his lady (the sister of Leslie Forster) for a short time. I own I had formed a very different idea of his exterior and manners. Your Irish man of genius commonly has somewhat *volcanic* about him; flash, and fertility, and now and then a puff of smoke too, though often also with fine coruscations and aspirations of flame and starry scintillations; but North's manner is so quiet, and soft, and insinuating, that I should never have guessed him to be an Irishman; though you cannot hear him converse even for a few minutes, without conceiving both respect and regard for him.

"I hope you are not as much out of humour with me as I am with myself for not having written to you sooner. Really my eyes have been much worse than usual. Indeed the sea commonly disagrees with them. As for one or two queries which you put to me, it was rather the effect of your kind wish to make me an associate in your speculations (which I assure you I love to be) than any need you could have of my counsel, which led you to put them. For your going to the West Indies, most decidedly, No. And I own I should require arguments which have not occurred to my own mind to make me approve of your sending out any one to inquire into facts. Though if you could employ any confidential person there to inquire after good witnesses if we should need them, that might be a very useful search. As to your Review, it must be

a useful occupation to yourself, if even you should not print it, since you will thereby accumulate and apply valuable stores of information. The season has been very ungenial, and there has been much illness passim. I have been hoping for summer till the almanack calls it autumn. But as we have books here, we may set bad weather at defiance. We are almost on a meridian. I sincerely say, that it would greatly gratify me to be able to join parties. Our high west wind would this very day carry us to you in a balloon in a few hours.'

"But, my dear friend, I don't like to conclude without one serious word. Indeed were I so to do, my letter would be a very unfaithful picture of my mind, and a letter to a friend ought to be quite a copy of it. For my most affectionate thoughts and feelings about you and yours are serious; far above the region of levities and frivolities. May it please God, my dear friend, to bless you with a long course of usefulness, and honour, and comfort; and may you and I, and all that are most dear to us respectively, after having filled up our appointed course according to the will of God, in His faith, and fear, and love, as redeemed and grateful purchases of the blood of Christ, be received into that world of peace, and love, and joy, where all will be holiness and happiness for evermore—so wishes, so prays,

Your sincere and affectionate Friend,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. I have not time to say what I ought about your article on Captain Manby's plan. But I admire and love Manby.

"T. F. Buxton Esq."

TO LADY OLIVIA B. SPARROW.

"Barmouth, North Wales, Sept. 16, 1823.

"My dear Friend,

I need not assure you, that you and yours have been much in my mind, and are at this time peculiarly so. Though you are a resident of a flat country, you are as full as any one ought to be of kind feelings towards your friends. But I really believe it is not a mere imagination, that in the case of a more cold-blooded creature like myself, a country of lakes, and rocks, and mountains, like that which I am now inhabiting, appears to call forth all the affections into augmented animation. The feeling extends to those that are absent from me, and as when I was a very young man, (a *very* young man understand,) I was always in danger of falling in love when I was an inhabitant of romantic countries, so even now the same sublime scenery warms my heart with a double measure of friendship, and I can call around me the images of the friends I love, though hundreds of miles asunder, and climb with them in imagination the mountain's brow, and watch the rushing of the waterfall. I wish however that you were here. I never was at any sea place at all to be compared with this; and the only objection to the place that is at all reasonable, I mean that of the sand being so fine that

it blows like the whirlwind of the African deserts, does not at all apply to two or three houses that are built on an eminence above the village, in the best of which we reside.

"And now, my dear friend, farewell. May the best blessings be continued to be poured out on you, and on those most dear to you. Believe me

Ever sincerely and affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

From this retirement he watched with intense interest the progress of his cause. "I am expecting tidings of the reception given in the West Indies to the account of the parliamentary proceedings, and more especially of Mr. Canning's proposals."[2] "My heart and head are full of West Indian matters."[3] "Barham's pamphlet has been read to me, and you were right in remarking that it is in our favour. It is really creditable both to his understanding and principles, and shows that he must have spent much time in devising his plan."[4] "I wish that I could be as easy about insurrections as you and Stephen. That they would not happen if the people on the spot really apprehended them, and would take reasonable means of guarding against them, I verily believe, but rebus sic stantibus, I have ever been, I own, and still am, afraid on that head. Yet what can we do but act as cautiously as justice and humanity will allow?"[5]

[2] To Charles Grant Esq. Sept. 13.
[3] To J. Stephen Esq. Oct. 20.
[4] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Sept. 20.
[5] Ib. Oct. 13.

His anxiety had been increased by the measures into which government had been led by the fallacious representations of the colonists. His complaints of the cruelty of the driving system, and of its destructive effect upon the negroes, had been warmly met by the assertion that the whip was carried into the field as a mere badge of authority. This positive assertion was unhappily believed by ministers; and as such a sign of office was painful and degrading, they at once ordered its disuse in the Crown colonies. The arrival of this order caused such alarm among the whites, that the local governors would not venture on its publication. Yet the domestic slaves soon gathered from the violent language of the planters, that some great measures which concerned their race had been urged upon their masters. Fame magnified the rumour, and it was whispered that they alone stood between the black and liberty. The excitement was soon general, and broke out in Demerara into open insurrection, in which some white men lost their lives, and for which many blacks afterwards suffered. These results Mr. Wilberforce had dreaded, as soon as he heard the measures which government had taken. "What!" he at once exclaimed, "have they given such an order without preparation, and without explaining their purpose to the slaves—why it is positive madness!"

The mischief however, as usual, was charged upon himself. Even "Mr. Canning's private secretary stated that the insurrection in Demerara had been instigated by Wilberforce, Buxton, and Co. Now

I," adds his informant, "have no scruple in saying, that in whatever degree the disturbances in Demerara are connected with England, they are the work of Canning, Bathurst, and Co., and not of your firm. You may remember how I held up my hands in utter astonishment at hearing that they had begun their operations by an act of direct interference between master and slave, and that of the most delicate and difficult description. The whip is the grand badge of slavery in the apprehension of the slaves, who feel it as the prominent mark of their servile state; its removal would naturally be but another name for emancipation. Our plan was certainly of a very different kind. They should have begun with all those reforms which would have had a wonderful influence, without seeming directly and suddenly to weaken the master's authority. These acting silently and progressively would have prepared the way for the great change of substituting some other impulse to labour for the whip."[6]

"I am clear," replies Mr. Wilberforce,[7] "that we should become the assailants, and charge government with provoking the insurrection. As to the mode of carrying reforms into operation, I have thought precisely with you. The slaves it appears to me should be called together, and told that henceforth they would not be flogged at the time, (in the field,) but at night after the day's work, if they had not

[6] Z. Macaulay Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq. Nov. 11.
[7] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Nov. 13.

conducted themselves properly. Surely if they could understand the proclamation read to them from the King after the Barbadoes insurrection, they could comprehend this."

This was not the language of one who had trifled with the safety of the whites. But no moderation could disarm his opponents. Private calumny, the established weapon of West Indian warfare, awoke in all its strength; and the virulence of Cobbett, who amongst his many changes was constant only in his hatred to the friends of Africa, was reinforced by fresh allies. Even his retirement in North Wales could not withdraw Mr. Wilberforce from these attacks. On settling at Barmouth he found that a clergyman officiated in English in a public room, when the service in the parish church was in the Welsh language. Like the other visitors, he availed himself gladly of the opportunity. But for this simple act he was, a few weeks afterwards, declared by a Sunday newspaper to have set up a conventicle in opposition to the Church, and was held forth as a secret enemy of all our most valued institutions. Nor were these his sole assailants; a scurrilous "voice from Jamaica" charged him with the grossest falsehood; while its author boldly denied, from his own personal experience, the religious destitution of the slaves.[8] These personal attacks he was disposed to leave as usual without

[8] "I have myself," said Mr. Bridges, "celebrated 187 marriages since I came into this parish." On inquiry it proved that all but three of them had been got up at the time, in order to furnish an answer to Mr. Wilberforce's Appeal.

any notice. "John Bull for three or four weeks past has been abusing me grossly. Blessed be God it is groundlessly. One of his paragraphs was sent me the other day, with only these three words, 'Thou vile hypocrite!' I should have been thirty or forty years in public life to little purpose, if this discomposed me."[9] "My judgment is clearly as to myself that it will be best to let him go on; to give him rope, according to the common saying. Indeed if I have been rightly informed, such general abuse would not be deemed a libel by the lawyers. And really any personal feelings whether concerning you or myself," he tells Mr. Macaulay,[10] "are lost in my sense of the malignity of attempting to deter people from becoming the advocates of a public question, by pouring forth upon them all the venom they can secrete or imbibe. But really I am falling into John Bull's trap, for I am expending on him my eyesight of which I have too little, and keeping too long in the house, instead of breathing the fresh air of the country." "Bridges's pamphlet has been read to me, but it is really below criticism, though shamefully discreditable in some parts."[11] "The joke about the Virgin Islands is but middling, but for a hoax, (a word which I abominate however, and would express by a still shorter monosyllable,) the statement itself is not bad, and I think you assign to it too severe an epithet in styling it malignant."[12]

The conduct of St. Paul in sending back the fugi-

[9] Diary, Nov. 23.
[10] To Zachary Macaulay Esq. Oct. 31.
[11] Ib. Sept. 8.
[12] Ib. Oct. 8.

tive Onesimus was brought against him in one of these attacks. "St. Paul," he answers,[13] "directed Philemon to regard him as a brother. He did not rend the civil tie that bound him to his master by individual power. No more do we; but by directing him to be treated as a brother, did he not substantially claim for him even more than we ask for negro slaves? And Onesimus had been a thief as well as a run-away. Yet to these gentlemen I would reply, in Johnson's language to Millar, I am glad they read the Scriptures at all, and for any purpose."

One error was found in his Appeal which he begged might be corrected in a new edition. "It was inadvertence, for I knew it was Penn and Venables, not Venables and Vernon, who were the captors of Jamaica. Mr. Bridges has hit the blot, and so did dear, kind Inglis. But Bridges erroneously imputes to me a mistake as to the Caribs of St. Vincent's, whom he confounds with the yellow Caribs, of whom I knew more than he did; poor Sir William Young having often shown me a picture of the last family of them. I wish," he concludes his letter, "that you could view the prospect from my window. Cader Idris in all his grandeur. But you, my dear friend, are better employed; brightening a crown I trust for future honour, and benefiting your fellow-creatures."[14]

Mr. Macaulay, who was about to notice Mr. Bridges's pamphlet, begged him to point out some of its misrepresentations. "Such a performance,"

[13] Private Mem. [14] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Sept. 18.

he replied, "could, I should have thought, do no harm with any who were well affected to our object. My chief difficulty in thinking over it was, that the writer had subjected himself to charges so grave that I scarcely liked to urge them. However to-morrow D. V. I will take it in hand again. In truth I must begin by having it read through to me, for dear Grant's death has forced it entirely out of my thoughts."[15] "How easy a dismission, and how desirable to one so assuredly prepared as he! Oh he was indeed a true Christian."[16] "I can sincerely say," he told Mr. Harford, "that he was one of the very best men I ever knew. And had he enjoyed in early youth the advantages of a first-rate education, he would have been as distinguished in literature as he was in business. He lived so habitually above this world, as to be ready to be called at any moment into the next; and I cannot but believe that it was in mercy he was spared all those bodily sufferings which were likely to be very great in the dissolution of a frame so firmly compacted as his. He will be a great public loss, though we are called upon to praise the goodness of God in not taking him from us till he had been enabled to sow and cultivate the good seed in India, so as to insure, humanly speaking, a large and continually augmenting harvest."

These bold imputations of hypocrisy and falsehood furthered in the end the cause they were intended to obstruct, by forcing on the defenders of the negro a

[15] To Z. Macaulay Esq. Nov. 17. [16] Diary, Nov. 2.

still more searching investigation of the colonial system. Then was laid open that prison-house abhorred by God and man, and those secrets were revealed which posterity will view with equal wonder and abhorrence. But from this tale of horrors we may turn aside. Age, and increasing infirmities, prevented Mr. Wilberforce from bearing here that main part which he had occupied in his warfare of twenty years against the Slave Trade. To superintend the production of evidence, to watch the changes of the public mind, to procure or circulate information, to fix the stations of his various instruments or coadjutors; these had then been his care, and they had often cost more labour and anxiety than the mere fighting of the cause through parliament. But these he now resigned to other hands.

"What a good pamphlet that is," he tells Mr. Macaulay, [17] "which is taken from the Imperial Magazine! Do you know its author? I half suppose that it is only yourself in another form, for I know that it cannot be Stephen, and you and he are authors-general for our cause. I am almost good for nothing, and I rejoice that there are younger and better labourers." "The decay of my memory is enforced on me continually, and indeed, I perceived it as long ago as before I resigned the representation of Yorkshire. It powerfully strengthened my determination to relinquish that honourable and useful station, though I did not talk much about it at the time." [18] But though he thought it most expedient

[17] Sept. 30. [18] To J. Stephen Esq. Aug. 30.

to commit to other hands the main conduct of the increasing controversy, he would not shrink from such exertion as was still within his power, and returned therefore to London in December, to take his share in the approaching discussions.

On his road he halted at Lord Grosvenor's, and staid afterwards with several friends whose neighbourhood he entered. During one of these halts he wrote to a son at college.

Yoxall Lodge, Nov. 30, 1823.

"My dear ——,

I enclose you the halves of the bank notes; the remaining halves shall follow. Always, I repeat it my dear ——, open your heart to me without reserve on this as on any other subject. There is a vile and base sentiment current among men of the world, that if you wish to preserve a friend, you must guard against having any pecuniary transactions with him; but it is a caution altogether unworthy of a Christian bosom. It is bottomed on the supposed superior value of money to every other object, and in a very low estimate of human friendship. I hope I do not undervalue money, but I prize time at a far higher rate, and I have no fear that any money transactions can ever lessen the mutual confidence and affection which subsists between us.

"As to dear ——'s approaching trial, I am much less anxious about the result than might be expected, considering my warm affection for him and the value I set on learning; but I am satisfied because I am

sure he has been employing his time well. There is often in the result of public examinations much of what we improperly call chance; giving it that name because we cannot assign the facts to any known causes. But ——'s mind may be easy so far as I am concerned, though I certainly should rejoice in his success.

"It is late, and my eyes give indication that it is time for me to stop; so I will only say, may God bless you both. I am now in the house at which for many years I used to pass several weeks, sometimes months, in my bachelor state, and it affects me deeply to be now corresponding with four sons, one of them a husband and a father, and two of them at college. So life passes away. May you, my dearest ——, be ever aware of the rapid flight of time, and of the uncertainty of life, that whenever the summons shall be issued, you may be found ready. Farewell.

Ever your most affectionate Father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

An affectionate greeting from his old friend Hannah More welcomed him again to London. "I hear," she wrote,[19] "from others a favourable account of your health. I thank God for this comfort amidst the sad reports I receive of other dear friends."

He replied from Lord Calthorpe's seat in Suffolk, to which he had carried down his children for a Christmas visit.

[19] Dec. 26.

"Suffolk, Jan. 8, 1824.

"My dear Friend,

The string you touched in your last truly kind letter has been vibrating ever since, and making music most delightful to a parent's mental ear; an organ not commonly noticed, but which is full as much in daily exercise as the mind's eye, of which we speak so familiarly. As I believe my dear son's greatest pleasure from his academical success has arisen out of that which he sees his mother and I have received from it, so my greatest gratification has been from the cordial congratulations of kind friends, and not one of them I can truly say has given me such sober certainty of waking bliss, as your letter and its enclosure.

"I do not think I thanked you for your former highly entertaining letter, in which you manifested that your critical powers are in no degree 'dulled.' I had formed the same estimate of Irving's book; and I must say I never was more agreeably disappointed than by the two sermons I heard from him: and, by the way, let me state that I would not go when all the town was flocking around him, as they had done to Master Betty, or Mr. Kean, nor till I had been assured by a very sensible inhabitant of Glasgow, who had watched him there for three or four years, that he was a truly good man and active pastor, particularly attentive to the poor. I cannot conceive a more attentive audience than he had for a full hour and a half; and his language (free from all

the affectation and bombast which his 'Orations' and 'Argument' exhibit) was remarkably and even felicitously forcible and impressive. I am not so self-conceited as to suppose that his knowing I was to be present, which he did, could dispose him to be more chaste and reasonable than in his printed discourses, but he might have learned from some of the critiques that had been published, that his style would not take. I own I think he cannot be a scholar; no classical taste could have borne his turgid affectation. But as you truly say, it is faulty not merely in point of style. But I have expended on him much more of my little stock of eyesight than I meant; and I must not forget to tell you of the fresh proofs I have received during my summer's peregrinations, of the greatly improved state of society in this country since I came into life, and of the hopeful promises of future good, which this moral advancement holds out to us. Every where schools; and schools in which religious instruction is attended to—I met fresh traces, my dear friend, of the blessed effects of your writings.

"As for John Bull, I can truly say that I am full as callous as I ought to be to the calumnies of party bitterness. The Barmouth story of my helping to set up an irregular church service, and forsaking that of the parish, was not only not conformable to truth, but opposite to it. But this justification must be to you superfluous. I am indignant, however, to hear that the vile falsehoods circulated against our dear, excellent Macaulay, have obtained credit in some circles in which one would have hoped there would been more

of the spirit of English justice, if not of Christian charity, than to suffer people to give credence to unproved assertions to the discredit of a man who had preserved the good opinion for twenty-five years of a number of respectable friends, who had witnessed his conduct in domestic and social life. If any thing can make the people of this country submit to a censorship of the press, it will be this cannibal malignity in the devouring private characters. The false judgments of our character and conduct that are sometimes formed even by good men, often endear to me the idea of that blessed world where, at least, justice shall be done us, and where I trust many will embrace each other with mutual love, who are here scowling at each other, as Dr. Chalmers would say, with jealous defiance.

"But I must lay down my pen, which I have used for some time almost without looking at it. Your eyes will be taxed I fear to spare my own.—Farewell, my dear friend, may Heaven's best blessings be abundantly poured forth on you. Lady Olivia Sparrow is here; speaking of her son-in-law in very gratifying terms. Simeon just gone; better than usual. Here is a large house, collecting from all quarters. You are not forgotten by any of us. My dear wife and children, if they knew of my writing, would send the assurance of their respect and attachment.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"Jan. 28th. We returned from Stratton Park—

never were we received with greater kindness than by Sir Thomas and Lady Baring, and the whole family. They appear the benevolent fosterers of the distressed, and promoters of the improvement of the lower orders. Went there chiefly to bring my dear children acquainted with such worthy people."[20]

In February parliament met, and Mr. Wilberforce was at his post. "Feb. 3rd. House met. Dined at lodgings—Buxton and several others. Then House—Brougham clever—first day's speech and address: inculcating on the House to be temperate. 4th. Webster and Hankey with me about the Demerara insurrection. 5th. Stephen's book out to-day. 6th. Calling on Lord Melville about the naval abominations; and conferring with Brougham about circuit question. 14th. Meeting at African Institution. We waited on Canning about twelve. Sadly disappointed by his plan of merely setting up the particulars he consented to last year by an Order of Council in Trinidad; not in Guiana because of the insurrection. With Canning till two. At lodgings till three. Then Duke of Gloucester's, where Lord Lansdown, Stephen, and Brougham added to our consultation till five. Then home. Dined at Duke of Gloucester's—Lord and Lady Lansdown, Lord and Lady Roseberry; Brougham and Mackintosh were to windward of me—most pleasant conversation. Home latish."[21] "I drew the highest prize in the lottery; I sat by Sir J. Mackintosh."[22]

"March 1st. Went to the House for Martin's Bill

[20] Diary. [21] Ib. March 1. [22] Con. Mem.

on cruelty to animals. It is opposed on the ground of the rich having their own amusements, and that it would be hard to rob the poor of theirs—a most fallacious argument; and one which has its root in a contempt for the poor. I would zealously promote the real comfort of the poor. I love the idea of having comfortable causeway walks for them along the public roads. This is most strictly congenial to the British constitution, which, in its political as well as its religious regulations, takes special care of the convenience of the poorer classes. The great distinction between our constitution and that of the ancient republics is, that with them the general advantage was the object, without particular regard to individual comfort: whereas in England individual comfort has been the object, and the general advantage has been sought through it."[23]

The debate which he expected was put off by "Abercrombie's coming forward with a case of breach of privilege against the Chancellor, for charging him on the bench with falsehood. Brougham spoke admirably, and Abercrombie excellently; indeed Scarlett also, and all the lawyers, did well. Canning spoke admirably in mitigation, and Peel defended as well as could be, but the case was too strong to be put by without an authorized apology. So though I longed to go away I staid and voted, 102 to 150. I seldom recollect, certainly not for many years, suffering so much pain." "I could not forget the friendly intercourse of former days, when Sir J. Scott used to be a great deal at my

[23] Con. Mem.

house. I saw much of him then, and it is no more than his due to say, that when he was Solicitor and Attorney-General under Pitt, he never fawned and flattered as some did, but always assumed the tone and station of a man who was conscious that he must show he respected himself if he wished to be respected by others."[24]

He was now about to come forward again as an advocate for the personal protection of the most despised portion of his fellow-subjects. "March 3rd. Hearing an anti-pamphlet by a Dominica planter, imputing to me the grossest falsehoods, and making the most unfounded assertions. Busy with architect and builder about the great nuisance we have discovered in this house." It is in little things that men are seen. Some of his family were evidently much discomposed at the discovery here alluded to, but Mr. Wilberforce was cheerful and happy, saying, "It is only as if I had lost £4 or 5000. These are the things that are to season the insipidity of life. Johnson says, 'All men have their troubles and annoyances, but the man of the world is too wise to talk about them.' I am sure an old man should be too wise to feel them." At the same time he received a letter from a gentleman in want asking for £100. "Ah," he said, "these are the things which go to my heart."

His own cause was now coming on. "Buxton, and Macaulay, and I consulted about the tone to be taken when Canning should bring his plan forward."[25] The debate came on by the 16th. "Canning opened in a

[24] Con. Mem. [25] Diary, March 5.

very guarded speech. Buxton strong, above concert pitch. I was better voiced and better heard than usual."[26] He was "determined to wash his hands of the blood which might be spilled by thus trifling with the hopes of men."[27] He spoke out therefore freely. He condemned strongly the uncertain tone of government, as mischievous alike to the slaves and to their owners, and warned them, as the fruit of his own long experience, that no effectual reforms would be made by the colonies themselves. "I fear that, despairing of relief from the British parliament, the negroes will take the cause into their own hands and endeavour to effect their own liberation. No man living would more sincerely lament such conduct than myself. I can most solemnly declare that the subject of my daily and nightly prayer—that the hope and desire which I feel from the very bottom of my soul—is that so dreadful an event may not happen. Still it is a consequence which I cannot but apprehend, and as an honest man I feel it my duty to state that apprehension. Let the House only consider what a terrible thing it is for men who have long been strangers to the light, when the bright beams of day have begun to break in upon their gloom, to have the boon suddenly withdrawn, and be afresh consigned to darkness. Whatever parliament may do, I implore them to do it speedily and firmly. Let them not proceed with hesitating steps; let them not tamper with the feelings and the passions which they have themselves excited. 'For hope deferred maketh the heart sick.'"

[26] Diary. [27] Mr. Buxton's Con. Mem. of the preceding day.

On this occasion he spoke long and powerfully, but the effort seemed greater than his strength would bear, and left behind evident traces of over-exertion. He was in the House indeed a few days later, and heard "Lord John Russell's motion about the French evacuating Spain. He made no hand of it. Canning invincibly comic."[28] He had gone to the House unwell, and not intending to remain, but had been enchained by Mr. Canning's admirable humour. He returned home quite full of it; and as he repeated to his family the exquisite raillery of the "light horseman's uniform," and "heavy Falmouth coach," was overpowered, as he scarce ever was, with laughter which he could not repress. "Canning's drollery of voice and manner were inimitable; there is a lighting up of his features, and a comic play about the mouth, when the full fun of the approaching witticism strikes his own mind, which prepares you for the burst which is to follow."[29] Yet he would not allow himself the use of these effective weapons, though he had them always at command. "Often during a debate," says Mr. Buxton, "would he whisper to me hints and witticisms which would have filled the House with merriment, and overwhelmed his opponent. But when he rose to speak, though he went close to the very thoughts he had poured into my ear, he restrained himself from uttering them, nor would he ever give vent to any one allusion which could give another pain."

This night he went to his room unwell, though not, it was hoped, seriously; but an insidious disease was

[28] Diary, March 19. [29] Con. Mem.

already secretly at work, and he was soon in the utmost danger from an inflammation of the lungs. His perfect patience, and the bursts of love and thankfulness which were ever breaking forth throughout this season of restlessness and languor, can never be forgotten by those who watched with the deepest anxiety beside the sick-bed of such a father. He was continually repeating what shortly before he had observed to Mr. Stephen;[30] "No man has been more favoured than I, for even when I am ill my complaints occasion little suffering." Beckoning to him one of his sons when he was scarce able to speak, he whispered, "At this moment I have your face before me when I left you at school in Leicestershire."[31]

To Mr. Babington, who had expressed his pleasure at witnessing the great affection borne him by his family, he wrote in reply—"No physician can devise, and no money can purchase, such a cordial restorative to a sick man. And then how exceedingly favourable are these domestic blessings to a state of heart pleasing to God!" "How much have I seen some characters improved, even independently of all religious principles, by the softening and stimulating power which He has graciously imparted to these strong affections."[32]

It would indeed be strange if it had been otherwise. He was beloved in general society; but if he sparkled there, he shone at home. None but his own family could fully know the warmth of his heart, or the unequalled sweetness of his temper.

[30] Nov. 29, 1823. [31] Vid. vol. iv. p. 73.. [32] Con. Mem.

With the strictest truth they can affirm, that never in the most unguarded moments of domestic privacy did they see obscured, in word or action, the full sunshine of his kindliest affections.

> "His every deed and word that he did say
> Was like enchantment, which through both the eyes,
> And both the ears, did steal the heart away."

One of the first letters which he wrote when convalescent, was to Hannah More.

TO MRS. HANNAH MORE.

"Near London, May 10, 1824.

"My dear Friend,

I should disobey conscience alike and feeling, if I were not to assign to you the priority over all my numerous correspondents, and except a few lines to our sweet Lady Olivia, into which I was seduced by the grateful impulse produced by a most kind letter from her three days ago, this is the first of my epistolary performances since my long disuse of my pen. Not that I consider myself as having now resumed it. Mrs. W. still franks for me, (by post-office permission,) and I do not even yet open my own letters, much less do I read, or rather hear them. And I am conscious there is some ground for the excessive solicitude with which my dearest wife and most affectionate children warn me against overworking. For the present I am completely animalized; and having nearly re-entered upon all my natural tastes and relishes as to food, (in sickness we learn experi-

mentally that such 'little things are great to little man,') I am eating, and drinking, and sleeping, and airing, and exercising, as the main business of life. But for this I have Lord Bacon's authority: indeed I trust a still higher than his. For each and all of these is associated with a grateful sense of the loving-kindness of that gracious Being, whose goodness and mercy continue to be so profusely poured out on me, and who thus bountifully strews with flowers the way—the narrow way, I humbly hope, that leads, if we obey his blessed drawings, to that better world wherein all will be congenial with the unalloyed and unobstructed influences of the God of holiness and love.

"But I am scarcely leaving myself room to say how deeply I feel your kindness, and that of many dear friends, in taking such an affectionate interest in my recovery. Really were there no loss of time, it ought to be a sufficient recompence for all the sufferings of sickness, (but my sufferings were by no means such as yours,) to have experienced such unexceedable, (I find no word ready made, so I must fabricate one,) such unexceedable attentions by night and by day as were incessantly lavished on me. How often did I think of the state of poor soldiers, or negro slaves, who undergoing pains and miseries far greater than mine, were destitute of almost all my bodily alleviations, and still more of all my mental cordials!

"My dear friend, I must say farewell. Pray for me, that I may endeavour to use to the glory

of God and the benefit of my fellow-creatures, whatever measure of efficiency His good providence may allot me. The seventy-first Psalm is often in my mind. May it be more and more applicable to me in its best purposes. Though in this letter I have been such an egotist, I assure you I am not such in mind. On the contrary, both my head and heart are teeming with sentiments and feelings called forth by the contemplation of the correspondent to whom I am writing. Your sheaves scarcely admit of an addition; but may you be spared to us yet a season, if it please God, to excite the sympathies of the large circle of those who esteem and love you for your work's sake. You will witness I doubt not hereafter in your paradisaical state the blessed harvest which your labours will long continue to be the instrument of bringing into the granary of God.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"I must *go and get* a frank. Friendly remembrances to Miss Frowd if with you."

The last entry of his Diary before he was confined wholly to his bed, was, "Poor Smith the missionary died in prison at Demerara! The day of reckoning will come;"—and the first public business he attempted, after leaving his sick room, was, (June 1st,) "Preparing for Smith the missionary's business. I was at the House the first time for eight weeks or more. Brougham made a capital speech, by Mackin-

tosh well termed impregnable. I doubt not he will be great in reply. Mackintosh's own was most beautiful, his mind teemed with ideas."[33] The decision was postponed till the 11th. In the interval he says, "I very much wish, if my voice should be strong enough, to bear my testimony against the scandalous injustice exercised upon poor Smith."[34] "The case proved against him is greatly short of what I thought it might have been. I myself once saw a missionary's journal, and its contents would have been capable of being perverted into a much stronger charge of promoting discontent amongst the slaves. Had I happened for instance to correspond with Smith, that alone would have hanged him."[35]

On the day of the adjourned debate, he "went to Stephen's to be quiet for three or four hours, and was so, and read papers, and thought. Yet I quite forgot my topics for a speech, and made sad work of it. Brougham, Lushington, Williams, Denman—all else did well, Canning also well. I greatly doubt if I had not better give up taking part in the House of Commons." Once more he solemnly recorded his conviction, that the only real hope of the negro slaves must be from the British parliament. "To the House, and during Mackintosh's speech on the South American Independence petition, I arranged my own protest on presenting a petition from Carlow. Baring at first strong, but afterwards most kindly complimentary to me. I felt it my duty to enter my solemn protest against the plan of government as

[33] Diary. [34] To J. Stephen Esq. June 4. [35] MS. Mem.

hopeless and dangerous. It is nothing short of infatuation to depend on the colonial assemblies for imitating a model to be set up in Trinidad. If mischief happens, as I fear, it will not be chargeable on me." [36]

"The West Indians," he said, "abhor alike the end we have in view, and the means by which we hope to reach it. They frankly avow that from the emancipation of their slaves they look for inevitable ruin; whilst all their prejudices are revolted by each of our remedial measures. If they agreed with us as to our grand object, we might hope to lessen by degrees their aversion to our several steps; or were those measures singly acceptable to them, we might hope gradually and almost insensibly to lead them to our end. But what can we hope, when they abhor alike both means and end? It is with reluctance and pain I come forward, but I esteem it my bounden duty to protest against the policy on which we are now acting. 'Liberavi animam meam.' May it please God to disappoint my expectations, and to render the result more favourable than I anticipate."

These prophetic words were the last which he uttered in the House of Commons. Ten days later he set off, after attending a meeting held in honour of James Watt, for Lord Gambier's seat at Iver; and on the road was seized with a new attack of illness. When he reached Lord Gambier's, he was "but just able to be helped up-stairs to bed," [37] where he lay in an alarming state for almost a month.

[36] Diary, June 15. [37] Diary.

This second attack left him in so shattered a condition, as to enforce upon him the necessity of absolute repose, and as soon as he could move with safety, he took possession of a small house bordering on Uxbridge Common.

Here he lived in entire seclusion, though by no means in idleness. "We have been living very quietly; never visiting, scarcely receiving a single visitor. Often we have a little family reading in the evenings after tea, (Robertson's America,) which I should always like, if it did not compel me to write my letters in the morning, when I wish to be employed in more solid work. Oh that God would enable me to execute my long-formed purpose of writing another religious book. I have also a wish to write something political; my own life, and Pitt's too, coming into the discussion."[38]

He seemed almost to think that this temporary interval of rest needed some excuses; and evidently began the following letter with that feeling on his mind.

TO ZACHARY MACAULAY ESQ.

"My dear Macaulay,

I hope my old friends do me the justice to believe, that if for health's sake I estrange myself so much from them, it is of necessity, not from choice. I am much obliged to you for the New Times; but you need only name the paper, for I take it in, and the signature of Anglus would alone have sufficed for making me set my reader to work.

[38] Diary.

"You did not mention the subject of the labours in which you are now engaged. I cannot help wishing Sierra Leone and its history may be one of them. Government is far too economical in its African expenditure; and by enlightening the public you would lay the ground for a more liberal use of the means both of civil and spiritual improvement. You have yourself seen so much of the interior of our public offices, as to supersede the necessity of my unveiling their actual state; but from permanent causes, though the effect may be a little varied, according to the character and habits of the principal and the under secretary, there are vices in the Colonial Office, which, according to one's state of spirits, make one weep with grief and vexation, or knit one's brow with indignation. Farewell, my dear friend, and believe me,

Sincerely and affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

As the year advanced he moved by Dr. Chambers's advice to Bath—"the worst of all places for getting any business done. There is walking between the glasses and after the glasses, and then in rolls the tide of visitors full as regularly as that of the ocean, and like that, this human influx makes its way through and over every obstacle . . . Continual knockings while I have been writing, and at last one intruder has actually made a lodgement."[39] But against the annoyances of these interruptions were to be set those grateful meetings with old friends into which no man

[39] Letter to his daughter.

ever entered with a keener relish than himself. Some such he was now enjoying. "Oct. 19th. Venerable Rowland Hill dined with me—ætat 80. 22nd. John Smith called yesterday and talked very pleasingly, full of benevolence, intelligence, and information—very kind to me—has got an Artillery cadetship for me for the son of poor Lieut. S., and with an affectionate spirit that quite warms me with gratitude and affection."[40]

Not unfrequently he fell in here with some friend or acquaintance of his early life. "I talked with Mr. Neville in the Pump-room, whom I had met at Exton near fifty years ago: he 82 ætat—an astonishing man." It was a striking sight to witness such recognitions, in which general courtesy unfolded itself gradually into a more intimate exchange of early recollections. The sunshine of his own old age was shed for the time at least over his companion; and day after day as his eye found with pleasure his recovered friend, he would join his side and delight him with his powers of conversation; watching all the time for every opening by which he could lead on their intercourse to higher subjects, and gild, if need was, the latter days of his companion with the peaceful hope in which he walked himself. His stay at Bath was closed by visits to Blaize Castle and to Barley Wood. "Nov. 29th. Reached it at a quarter-past four—saw our friend for about half an hour before dinner. —— dined with us. He was in the army when young; has since taken orders and

[40] Diary.

seems intent on acting consistently with his profession, though the interest he manifestly takes in military matters reminds one of an officer in clergymen's clothes. Some relations in the army bring him acquainted with military men and anecdotes. Nov. 30th. Sat with Hannah More about an hour and half, and she as animated as ever I knew her, quoting authors, naming people, &c.—off about one after praying with her."

After a few days he "had returned again to his cottage retirement near Uxbridge, to collect his children round him, according to the good old English custom. I lay no little stress on the bringing together at Christmas all the members of the family if it can be effected. Such an anniversary, annually observed, tends to heal any little divisions, and to cherish mutual attachment."[41] The new year opened according to his wish. "Our dear boys living in much harmony. What cause have I for gratitude, seeing my five children, my son's wife, and two grandchildren all round my table! Praise the Lord, O my soul."[42] Never did any man live in more perpetual sunshine, or shed its cheerful light more constantly around him; yet there was a deep vein of pathos which mingled with his gaiety of temper, not perceived perhaps by the superficial eye, but discernible to close observers in his great tenderness of spirit. "I sometimes think," he said of himself, "that I have the art (though I am sure undesignedly) of concealing from my most intimate associates my

[41] Letter to his son. [42] Diary, Jan. 1, 1825.

real character. One particular I doubt if you have ever observed. I ought however to say that it is not constant: but I am at times much more disposed to melancholy than you would imagine." "The account I hear of you all from my son is very comfortable; at the same time I know that the young hands do not look very deep in their view of people of our time of life, and that while all is outwardly cheerful, and therefore to their eyes unclouded sunshine, we parents may have our secret anxieties and griefs."[43]

One important question had occupied his thoughts all through the autumn. His strength had been visibly impaired by the severe attacks of the spring and summer; and he was strongly recommended to retire from public life. He could not bring himself at once to acquiesce in this decision. "The idea of retiring and not endeavouring to bear" his "testimony once more in support of truth and righteousness," he found "very painful."[44] This was not from any restless wish to be in action. "There was no particular," he had three years before this time declared to Dr. Chalmers, "in which his estimate of things had been more corrected than in his judgment of the comparative usefulness of different individuals. To express my sentiments briefly I may say that I more and more enter into the spirit of that beautiful sonnet of Milton's on his blindness, ending,

> 'Who best
> Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best—
> They also serve who only stand and wait.'"

[43] To T. Babington Esq. Dec. 23. [44] Letter to Z. Macaulay Esq.

This quietness of mind was increased by his habitual reference of all that concerned himself to the leading of God's providence. In the course of this autumn, an arrangement was suggested to him by the friendly zeal of Sir John Sinclair, which would have removed him to the calmer atmosphere of the Upper House. "To your friendly suggestion," was his remarkable reply, "respecting changing the field of my parliamentary labours, I must say a word or two, premising that I do not intend to continue in public life longer than the present parliament. I will not deny that there have been periods in my life, when on worldly principles the attainment of a permanent, easy, and quiet seat in the legislature, would have been a pretty strong temptation to me. But, I thank God, I was strengthened against yielding to it. For (understand me rightly) as I had done nothing to make it naturally come to me, I must have endeavoured to go to it; and this would have been carving for myself, if I may use the expression, much more than a Christian ought to do."

His reluctance to retire sprung from deep humility. It was not so much that he wished to do more, as that he regretted he had done so little. "You kindly gave me," he answers Mr. Harford, "in a more Christian dialect, Horace's advice—

'Solve senescentem mature sanus equum.

Believe me, I clearly recognise the wisdom as well as the kindness of your counsel, though I scarcely dare trust myself on the topic of my wish, that any re-

maining particle of efficiency may be employed more than my faculties have ever yet been to the glory of God." "When I consider that my public life is nearly expired, and when I review the many years I have been in it, I am filled with the deepest compunction, from the consciousness of my having made so poor a use of the talents committed to my stewardship. The heart knows its own bitterness. We alone know ourselves, the opportunities we have enjoyed, and the comparative use we have made of them. But it is only to your friendly ear that I breathe out my secret sorrows. I might be supposed by others to be fishing for a compliment. Well, it is an unspeakable consolation that we serve a gracious Master, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not."[45] This was no passing feeling. A year later he wrote to Mr. Gurney.

TO J. J. GURNEY.

"Oct. 21, 1825.

"My dear Friend,

My eyes are indifferent, and were they ever so strong I should wear them out, were I to attempt to give expression to the sentiments and feelings with which my bosom is overcharged. Let us rejoice and bless God that we live in a land in which we are able to exert our faculties in mitigating the sufferings, redressing the wrongs, and above all, promoting the best interests of our fellow-creatures. I sometimes fear we are not sufficiently thankful for this most

[45] To T. Babington Esq. Oct. 5.

gratifying and honourable distinction; and perhaps I feel this the more strongly, because in the private ear of a Christian friend I will whisper, that though I should not speak truly if I were to charge my parliamentary life with sins of commission, (for I can call God to witness, so far as I can recollect, that I always spoke and voted according to the dictates of my conscience, for the public and not for my own private interest,) yet I am but too conscious of numerous and great sins of omission, many opportunities of doing good either not at all or very inadequately improved. Particularly, from an early period of my parliamentary life, I intended to propose a bill for greatly lessening the number of oaths, and once I carried on a previous inquiry, and had a committee formed for the purpose. But, alas! alas! I have been forced to retire from public life re infectâ, though I must say that several times I had reason to believe that some other members, chiefly official men, would take the measure off my hands, and I always preferred employing others on such occasions, that I might not be said to be trying to monopolize. But my friends deceived me. Believe me to be ever, my dear friend,

Yours very affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE "

Thoroughly had he imbibed the spirit of the precept, which bids us " when we have done all, say we be unprofitable servants," who after forty years of such service could see only his omissions. More in-

deed he might have effected if his habits had been strictly regular and business-like; but it would have been at a great sacrifice of incidental good. His daily tray-full of letters, which in 1806 so alarmed his colleague Mr. Fawkes, that he exclaimed on seeing it, "If this is to be member for Yorkshire the sooner I am rid of it the better," consumed many of his best hours; but they were given up to "Christian courtesy," and "the relief of individual distress."[46] He might have closed his doors against the tide of interruptions which flowed in upon him day by day; but if he had, many a friendless sufferer would have "cried unto the Lord against him." He gave way therefore to these interruptions upon principle. "It appears to me," he said in the review of his political life,[47] "that public men in this country should consider it one of the duties imposed on them by Providence, to receive and inquire into the case of distressed persons, who from finding them interested for suffering individuals, or classes of mankind, are naturally led to apply to them for the redress of their own grievances, or the supply of their own wants."

On this principle he strictly acted, and by a multitude of daily charities, as much as by his public conduct, "urged on the lingering progress of the human mind."[48]

"I was with him once," says Lord Clarendon, "when he was preparing to make an important mo-

[46] Diary. [47] To T. F. Buxton Esq. M. P. May 12, 1825.
[48] Lord Erskine of W. Wilberforce Esq. Preface to Fox's Speeches.

tion in the House of Commons. While he was most deeply engaged, a poor man called, I think his name was Simkins, who was in danger of being imprisoned for a small debt. He could find no one to be bound for him. Wilberforce did not like to become his surety without inquiry; it was contrary to a rule which he had made; but nothing could induce him to send the man away. 'His goods,' said he, 'will be sold, and the poor fellow will be totally ruined.' I believe, at last, he paid the debt himself; but I remember well the interruption which it gave to his business, which he would not resume till the case was provided for."

This was a sample of his life; and if he now looked back on many plans of usefulness which he had left unaccomplished, it was not because his time had been passed in ease or self-indulgence, but because he had never learned to "stop his ears at the cry of the poor." Yet though he thought with pain of leaving these things unattempted, he weighed carefully the advice of his friends, and set down at this time for serious reflection the following

REASONS FOR RETIRING NOW FROM PARLIAMENT.
(FEB. 1ST, 1825.)

"I have long meant to retire when this parliament should terminate; consequently, the only doubt is, whether to retire now, or at the end of the approaching session.

"The question then is, whether my qualified at-

tendance during this session affords such a prospect of doing good as to warrant my continuance in parliament for its term?

"Dr. Chambers does not deem it necessary to forbid my attendance altogether, but intimates fears that if an illness should occur, I might not have strength to stand it.

"Had I no other promising course of usefulness, it might or rather would be right to run the risk of a seizure, in my present line. But,

"1. I hope I may employ my pen to advantage if I retire into private life; and,

"2. My life is just now peculiarly valuable to my family—all at periods of life and in circumstances which render it extremely desirable, according to appearances, that I should be continued to them.

"I am not now much wanted in parliament; our cause has powerful advocates, who have now taken their stations.

"The example of a man's retiring when he feels his bodily and mental powers beginning to fail him, might probably be useful. The public have been so used to see persons turning a long-continued seat in parliament to account for obtaining rank, &c. that the contrary example the more needed, and it ought to be exhibited by one who professes to act on Christian principles."

On these grounds his resolution was soon taken, and forthwith announced to his most intimate acquaintances.

TO LADY O. B. SPARROW.

"Near Uxbridge, Feb. 7, 1825.

"My dear Friend,

Be it known to you, that I have at length determined to withdraw from parliament. My physician did not absolutely require this, but he would allow me to attend only on genial days, &c.; and even this permission he accompanied by a declaration that if I should bring on such another attack as I had last spring, I probably could not stand it. Thus I had to balance any little good I might hope to do by this occasional attendance in the House of Commons, where in truth I am not wanted, against the risk of losing all the benefit and comfort my family, and perhaps a wider circle, might derive from my prolonged continuance in private life; and these being the weights in the two scales, could I doubt which preponderated? I know I need not apologize for presuming that you will not be indifferent about any incident that concerns me so deeply. I hope not to be idle in private life, though less *noisy*.

"I have much more to write than my eyes can get through, but I did not like to use my amanuensis in writing to you. It is worse than shaking hands with a friend with one's gloves on. But I must say farewell. I rejoice (we rejoice) to hear Lady Mandeville

is going on so well. So this world passes, one retires, another comes forward. But there will be a world where there will be none of these changes, but in which, when once, through the infinite goodness of our God and Saviour, admitted, we shall continue for ever in happiness and glory. May you and I, my dear Lady O., and all we most love, be of that happy number.

Ever yours sincerely and affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The same announcement was made to a son at college, in the following letter.

"Near Uxbridge, Feb. 1.

"My dear ——,

I should not like you to hear from common rumour that I have decided to retire from public life, and therefore, though much pressed for time, I announce to you this to me important, and what from the affectionate concern my very dear —— takes in all that belongs to me, will be to him very interesting intelligence. It is to me almost like a change of nature to quit parliamentary life, all the particulars of which have been formed into habits during a course of almost forty-six years. But after mature reflection, the good I was likely to do in the House of Commons appeared to be outweighed by the probable danger to my life, and the consequent loss of any good I might yet do in a private station, either to my own family, or to a still wider circle. And it should

be borne in mind, that in this comparison, all that may be done in private life was to be balanced, not against the effect of the labours of even a single session, but to that of the occasional attendance to which alone my medical adviser would accede.

"What cause have I for thankfulness, that in withdrawing from the political circle, I retire into the bosom of a family whose affectionate assiduities would be sufficient to cheer the lowest state of poverty and depression, while I have all around me that can administer to my comfort, or rather enjoyment, in the evening of life! Praise the Lord, O my soul.' Indeed I hope I am in some degree, though not sufficiently, grateful for all these blessings. No one perhaps has such cause as myself to adopt the psalmist's declaration, 'Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.' Good night, my dear ——. Our friends the Babingtons are staying with us, which leaves me less time for writing even than I have eyesight. I know I shall be much pressed to-morrow, so I have taken up a very bad pen to-night. May God bless you—the constant wish, as in a few minutes it will be the prayer, of

Your most affectionate Father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The news of his determination was received with mingled feelings, which were well expressed by Southey. "I will not say that I am sorry for it, because I hope you have retired in time, and will therefore live the longer as well as more for yourself; but

that House will not look upon your like again."[49] "Your removal gives much pain to me," he heard from the member for Hull,[50] "in common with thousands. In myself it excites peculiar regret, because I have had frequent occasion to confirm the propriety of my own vote by an appeal to yours, and I now recollect with pleasure that I never walked into the lobby and left you in the House." In those who were now pledged to that great cause which had been peculiarly his own, this sorrow was still keener.

In the conduct of this cause, he had two years before named Mr. Buxton as his heir. "I then devolved my advocateship of the negro slaves on him, because it would have been wrong to have appointed an oppositionist."[51] He felt most deeply "the importance of keeping this great cause in possession of its old honourable distinction of being one in which all party differences were extinguished, Pitt and Fox fighting in the same rank."[52] In this same spirit he now committed to Mr. Buxton, rather than to any leading member of the House of Commons,[53] (as a "testamentary designation, and to hold him forth as the depositary of his principles on West Indian matters,"[54]) his application for the Chiltern Hundreds. "It is the first place that I ever asked for myself, and for near thirty years for any one else. When the day on which I am to

[49] Robert Southey Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq.
[50] D. Sykes Esq. [51] Diary. [52] Letter to Z. Macaulay Esq.
[53] Mr. Canning, Charles Grant, and Henry Brougham, were respectively pressed on him by various friends.
[54] To T. F. Buxton Esq.

lose my franking privilege is fixed, be so good as to let me know, that I may not send heavy packets to poor and distant correspondents after I lose my power of sending them without cost."[55] Mr. Buxton reminded him, in his reply, of the inscription which the Carthaginians placed upon the tomb of Hannibal, "We vehemently desired him in the day of battle." And Mr. William Smith wrote, "I do hope that our cause stands well. But I am sure that when it loses you it suffers a calamitous deprivation. We have indeed the prospect of brave and able recruits to fill our ranks, but the guiding spirit will long be missed." Scarcely less keen was the regret of others, who looked forward to the loss of his authority on moral and religious questions.

"Bedford Square, Feb. 7, 1825.

"My dear Sir,

It is with much regret, though I cannot say it is with any great surprise, that I hear of your intention to retire from parliament. It will be a painful loss to your very numerous friends and to the public, but it may be a wise decision as it respects yourself. After the arduous services in which you have been engaged for so many years, a little repose must be very desirable for the sake of your health, for the comfort of your family, and for the tranquillity of your own mind. If, as Lord Coke says, "every man is a debtor to his profession," yet I do not think you are now any debtor to the public whom you have so

[55] To T. F. Buxton Esq. Feb. 17.

long, so faithfully, so disinterestedly, so beneficially served. It must be a satisfaction to you to have observed, that the moral tone of the House of Commons, as well as of the nation at large, is much higher than when you first entered upon public life; and there can be no doubt that God has made you the honoured instrument of contributing much to this great improvement. There are I hope some young men of promise coming forward, but, alas! there is no one at present who can take your place; would that there were many Elishas on whom your mantle might fall. The prayers of thousands, my dear sir, will follow you into retirement, and mine will be continued among the rest, that your valuable life may be prolonged to the latest period as a blessing to your family, to the church of God, and to the world. With earnest desires that your latter years may be the best, and of course the happiest, and with most sincere and cordial respect and affection, I ever remain, my dear sir,

Your faithful Friend,
devoted and grateful Servant,
JOSEPH BUTTERWORTH.

"W. Wilberforce Esq."

This was no exaggerated estimate of the value of his present services. His place as a mere orator was still amongst the very first. When he spoke indeed on the common subjects of political dispute the effects of age were in a degree visible; but, to the very last, when he lighted on a thoroughly congenial subject,

he broke out into those strains which made Sir Samuel Romilly esteem him "the most efficient speaker in the House of Commons," and which had long before led Pitt himself to say repeatedly, "Of all the men I ever knew, Wilberforce has the greatest natural eloquence."[56] Mr. Morritt seems to have formed a very accurate conception both of his ordinary powers of speaking, and of that measure of decay which they at last exhibited. "I find," he says,[57] "that I have recorded my own general opinion of his oratory and parliamentary exertions, in terms which, though intended only to commemorate for my own future reflection the more recent impression they made, I extract from their privacy in my drawer, that you may be more sure of their being my genuine and impartial judgment.

"Wilberforce held a high and conspicuous place in oratory, even at a time when English eloquence rivalled whatever we read of in Athens or in Rome. His voice itself was beautiful; deep, clear, articulate, and flexible. I think his greatest premeditated efforts were made for the Abolition of the Trade in Slaves, and in supporting some of the measures brought forward by Pitt, for the more effectual suppression of revolutionary machinations, but he often rose unprepared in mixed debate, on the impulse of the moment, and seldom sat down without having struck into that higher tone of general reasoning and vivid illustration, which left on his hearers the impression of power beyond what the occasion had called

[56] Communicated by Lord Harrowby. [57] June 19, 1836.

forth. He was of course unequal, and I have often heard him confess that he never rose without embarrassment, and always felt for a while that he was languid and speaking feebly, though he warmed as he went on. I have heard the late Mr. Windham express the same discontent with himself, both probably from the high standard of excellence at which they aimed. I always felt, and have often heard it remarked by others, that in all his speeches, long or short, there was generally at least from five to ten minutes of brilliance, which even the best orator in the House might have envied.

"His own unaffected principles of humility, and his equally sincere estimate of the judgment and good intentions of others, which became in advancing life more and more predominant, influenced both his line of oratory, and his reasoning when not in the House of Commons. He gradually left off the keener weapons of ridicule and sarcasm, however well applied and justly aimed; but with the candour that gave what he thought due weight to an adversary's argument, he sometimes (as it seemed to me) with undue diffidence neglected or hesitated to enforce his own. Sometimes also, as on the questions involving peace or war, the wishes of his heart were at variance with the conclusions of his understanding, and 'resolutions of great pith and moment,'

'Were sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.'

"I have more than once remonstrated with him for giving us in his speech the deliberation which passed

in his own mind, instead of the result to which it led him, thus furnishing his opponents with better weapons than their own arsenal could supply. Of course this led to many an imputation of inconsistency from those who loved him not, which those who knew him not received; but the real difference was between the manly decision of his conduct, and his unfeigned distrust and diffidence of his own opinions."

But if his powers of oratory had been in some measure impaired by age, the authority of character had only ripened with his years. He had been long a standing proof of the fallacy of the assertion, that without connexion with a party, no man can attain political importance; and the "moral compulsion"[58] which he exercised continually strengthened. Here he was sure of his conclusions, and neither in word or deed was there any doubt or indecision. "It is the fashion to speak of Wilberforce," said one of the heads of the Colonial Office, whom in his later years he had been compelled to weary with his demands of justice for his clients, "as a gentle, yielding character, but I can only say that he is the most obstinate, impracticable fellow with whom I ever had to do." A friend met him once returning from an audience with one of the ministers, with whom he had remonstrated on an improper appointment—the nomination of a man of notoriously immoral character to a responsible office abroad.

[58] See Chalmers' Civic Economy, 1. § 5. "But after all, it may be asked of what possible use are such men in parliament," &c.? "In which passage," he tells Mr. Wilberforce, "I have attempted to sketch just what I conceive to be your own line of politics in parliament."—Letter to W. Wilberforce Esq. Jan. 17, 1821.

"I conceived," he said, "that the honour of the country was involved, and therefore I plainly told him my mind, and that he would have to answer hereafter for his choice, but he was so angry that I thought he would have knocked me down."

Such a man could not bid farewell to public life without much observation from his fellows, and without being followed into his retirement by the sincere regret of multitudes. It is not a little interesting to turn to the various intimations of the state of his own feelings at this trying moment. Nothing can exceed their simple quietness.

"I staid quietly at Uxbridge, spending the time very pleasantly. My chief business the preparing to quit parliament, which I settled to do about Sunday the 5th. The House on Thursday, Feb. 3rd, sitting four nights on the Bill prohibiting the Roman Catholic Association. Mackintosh seems to have been brilliant, Peel good, North and Leslie Forster full of matter and argument from facts, Plunket very able, and Tierney *himself* in reply to him. A Mr. Doherty, a lawyer, good. Dawson and Brownlow strong Anti-Catholic speakers, with striking facts. Robinson seems to have spoken ably, and Williams the lawyer. Never were there so many able speakers, though none so powerful as Pitt or Fox. Canning a more finished orator, but less impressive." [59]

"The veteris vestigia flammæ are kindled," he tells Mr. Buxton, "into a sort of dull heat, by the reports of your new debates." [60] Yet on the very day on which

[59] Diary, Feb. 7. [60] Feb. 15.

the new writ was to be moved, he was enjoying peacefully the simplest pleasures. "Foggy in the morning," says his Diary,[61] "but it cleared up and became delightful. The sun full out all day. The bees seduced to fly about into the crocus cups. The blackbirds singing."

To two of his sons who had requested him to send them his last frank, he wrote on the same day.

TO ROBERT ISAAC WILBERFORCE ESQ. AND SAMUEL WILBERFORCE ESQ. ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD.

"My dear Boys,

When Charles the First was on the very point of exchanging, as I trust, a temporal for an eternal crown, he was forced to be short, so he said but one word—and now I have but a moment in which to use my pen, and therefore, my dear boys, I also will adopt his language, and add as he did, REMEMBER.—You can fill up the chasm. I will only add, that with constant wishes and prayers for your usefulness, comfort, and honour here, and for glory, honour, and immortality for you hereafter, I remain,

Ever your most affectionate Father,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"Robert Isaac and Samuel Wilberforce Esqrs.

"I am not clear that this letter will pass free, and therefore I make it single."

[61] Feb. 22.

One more extract in a higher tone will complete the exhibition of his feelings. After speaking[62] in glowing language of the "full harvest" younger men might live to see, from "the good seed now sowing in this highly-favoured land and its dependencies, let me check," he continues, "this random sally of the imagination; and for you, though much younger than me, as well as for myself, let me recollect that we may humbly hope through the infinite mercies of our God and Saviour, to behold all the joys and glories that I have been anticipating for the generations to come, but to behold them from a higher elevation, and through a purer medium. We are not told that Moses was to experience after death any thing different from mankind in general; and we know that he took part in the events of this lower world, and on the mount of transfiguration talked with Christ concerning his death which he was to undergo at Jerusalem. And I love, my dear friend, to dwell on this idea, that after our departure from the scene of our earthly pilgrimage, we shall witness the development of the plans we may have formed for the benefit of our fellow-creatures; the growth and fruitage of the good principles we have implanted and cultivated in our children; and above all, the fulfilment of the prayers we have poured forth for them, in the large effusions on them of that heavenly grace, which above all things we have implored as their portion. It is almost, I fear, to touch too tender a string, but there is one within my

[62] Letter to Lady O. B. Sparrow.

breast also, which vibrates in exact unison with yours; and may I add, that I cannot doubt our own dear children are now taking a tender interest in all that concerns the real happiness of those parents, the value of whose Christian instruction, and prayers, and tears, they are in a situation to estimate more justly, and therefore to feel for them a more lively gratitude, than while they were our fellow-travellers through this transitory world. I must no longer trespass on my slender stock of eyesight, but say, farewell."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MARCH 1825 TO OCTOBER 1827.

Retires from London—Purchase of Highwood—Spring at Uxbridge Common—Visits—Dropmore—Sandgate—Walmer—Mechanics' Institutes—London University and religious education—Bath and its company—T. Moore—Blaize Castle—Return to London—Presides at the Anti-Slavery meeting—Beckenham—West Indian matters—Diary—Scott's novels—Bath—Quakers' meeting—Ampton—Correspondence with his children—Journey into Yorkshire—Affectionate reception—Loss of friends—Wentworth House and Lord Fitzwilliam—State of the clergy—Return to Highwood.

WHEN Mr. Wilberforce quitted parliament he determined to withdraw from London altogether. His temporary retirement near Uxbridge was exchanged, therefore, for a freehold residence at Highwood Hill, a pleasant spot, just "beyond the disk of the metropolis." ".We have bought a house about ten miles north of London," he tells Mr. Gisborne.[1] "I shall be a little Zemindar there; 140 acres of land, cottages, of my own, &c."

His feelings when purchasing this place are expressed in his comments on the habits of a friend.

[1] April 6.

"How rational is his mode of life! Domestic charities sweetening and cheering the defilements of worldly affairs. I partake in his longing for repose; and oh may I be enabled more and more to walk during the years which may yet remain for me in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." [2] "Oh may I only walk with God during my closing years, and then where is of little consequence." [3]

His new purchase was not yet ready for the reception of his family, and he spent the spring of 1825 in the quiet of his Uxbridge cottage, and rejoiced to find more time than heretofore for miscellaneous reading. "Hearing Southey's Book of the Church, and Butler's Answer—excellent for its purpose, as assuring the Roman Catholics that their cause good." "Parts of Clarendon and Baxter."

With the most unaffected simplicity he rejoiced to assert that "he was now no politician," and only read the newspapers to be master "of manners and opinions, in short, of the public mind, which to be collected undiquâque."

Many of his friends were now again his guests, and the notice of these visits in which he delighted, occupies a large share of his Diary. "March 24th. Inglis and two Thorntons came in the evening—staid all next day. Inglis extremely entertaining, and most kind. Not out of my dressing-room when they went, but Inglis chatted with me, and the girls shook hands. 27th. Macaulay and Tom came to dinner, and night. Tom infinitely overflowing with matter on all sub-

[2] Diary, March 4. [3] Ib. July 12.

jects, and most good-humoured. 28th. Macaulays off. Tom fertile and fluent to the last, and with unruffled good nature. Sir Stamford and Lady Raffles, and Dr. Morrison the Chinese scholar, came between one and two—Lord Gambier called, and we had an entertaining confabulation. Ward dined, and we had a very interesting evening. Good Morrison strongly censuring the lukewarmness of Christians, which prevents their devoting themselves to God's service, as missionaries for China. His plan that persons should become ministers of Chinese, and then settle on the borders. The Chinese a reading people; and he thinks by degrees you would introduce your knowledge and religion. Dear —— seems touched; may God direct him. Singular criminal law of the Battas, by which persons committing great crimes sentenced to be eat up alive; the injured party having the first choice—the ear claimed and eat, &c., until the mass fall on. The coup de grace, except in strong cases, given early. When Sir Stamford contended against the practice, the people urged, 'what defence can we have for our morals?' April 18th. I fear that I am wasting my precious time, and the night is coming fast with me. Oh may I strive to be ever abounding in the work of the Lord. May He enable me to commence some useful work. 30th. When breakfast was just over my attached old friend Creyke came over in a chaise and announced his staying till four. To so kind a friend I owe much more than the sacrifice of a single day. Made the time less a blank by getting him to read with me W. Whitmore's speech on the

Corn Laws. Evening Mr. and Mrs. North, and Leslie Forster, and Buxton, and Calthorpe, arrived. Much talk. May 20th. Butterworth dropped in with Professor Tholuck from Berlin."

As the year advanced, his own house not being yet repaired, he took the opportunity of paying several visits to his friends; beginning with his present neighbourhood. "To Dropmore, where received very kindly; walked with Grenville for an hour before and after dinner; it grieved me to see him so feeble—said he had profited more from Aristotle's Rhetoric than any other work. Spoke in favour of Reid and Stewart as right against Locke."[4] He was soon embarrassed by the multitude of friends who affectionately claimed a share of his first year of leisure; and excuses himself to Mr. Gisborne for "merely paying these touch-and-go visits, so to term them, to his various midland friends. But this is better than not doing homage to their lares at all, especially in your instance, under whose roof I formerly spent months of tranquil, and I trust friendly, enjoyment, which can never be forgotten."

With this kindly and cheerful spirit did he always look back on long-past days; and every excursion brought some such reflection into his mind. Thus in the earlier part of the summer he was for some time at his old Sandgate quarters, whence he went over to Walmer "to see the Castle, where I had been above thirty years ago, in poor Pitt's time. It was much improved." On his road to Dover he was "hearing

[4] Diary.

Sumner's Records of the Creation, and dictating Narrative of Life," and "returned with Gerard Noel and two of his daughters in his landau, and little black Swiss horses—walking part of the way. Full moon and not a cloud—sea-view magnificent. At Dover saw wild beasts."[5] Another excursion took him "to meet Mr. W. who had been in Jamaica for a few months, and about to go there again. He spoke of West Indian abuses, and of the strong things that had been said against them, with a Christian frankness which I never saw surpassed."[6] "24th. Being on the point of quitting Sandgate I could not spend the day[7] as I wished. Letters reading and despatching in the morning. Hearing Lords' Committee on Irish matters, Magee, and Archbishop of Dublin's evidence: Clapperton and Denham's letters about African discovery, kindly sent by Lord Bathurst. Evening, made calls. Let me try to find 'a convenient season.' Miss W—— consulted me lately about the point of duty respecting her attending her parish church. I urged it, on the ground of the prayers composing the chief purpose of social worship.

"Sept. 2nd. Dressing, heard Edinburgh Review of Roscoe's (Boccacio) Italian novelists. What an occupation for a man of talents in advanced age! After dinner to Taplow, where arrived before ten. 4th. I hope I felt the blessed use of the Lord's day in the interval between the churches. 5th. Called Lord Grenville's. Thought him better. He con-

[5] Diary, Aug. [6] Ib. Aug. 20. [7] His birth-day.

curred with me as to the impropriety of Castlereagh's being at once the negociator and the minister, instead of sending some propositions to be discussed and canvassed, and having light thrown upon them. Much interested by Pepys's Journal. Mrs. C. S. very pleasing—sang and played sweetly—very unaffected. 8th. At Eccleshall—most kindly received. 10th. Lord Harrowby rode over to see me, and I walked and sat with him, and he with me at my four o'clock dinner afterwards; very clever, and entertaining as always. Talked for an hour or more with Lord Sandon. The dear Bishop quite happy, and on good grounds."

By the 12th of October he was fixed at Bath, of which as usual he complains, "that of all places in the world it afforded him the least uninterrupted time. You are required to second the influence of the waters before, between, and after the glasses, by a liberal quantity of air and exercise; and if in despite of the doctors, you go to your desk, you cannot write for five minutes without a rat-tat-tat by the knocker, reminding you that you are in a large city, in which it is the practice to carry on most diligently an incessant system of calling and carding, against which both payer and receiver inveigh."[8] His Diary fills up this sketch. "15th. Introduced to Tom Moore by Sir T. Lethbridge, who walked with us a little. Moore's eye bright, his whole countenance very animated; but rather joyous than indi-

[8] Letter to a son at college.

cating sensibility. 17th. Here I have little leisure. My time, alas! is sadly frittered away. Henceforth I will note down each day's occupation. To-day heard Macaulay's Abstract of the Parliamentary Papers on the West India Colonies' Reform—newspapers—a little letter-writing. Hearing Walter Scott's Heart of Mid Lothian in the afternoon, and a little in the evening. 18th. Breakfasted with Lord Camden at the York Hotel, and talked over old matters. 20th. Hearing Macaulay's Abstract of the Papers laid before Parliament about the Slaves; a most useful work. How he shames me! Yet my eyes could not perform it, or any thing that requires eyesight. Too much time taken, and interest too, in Walter Scott's Heart of Mid Lothian. Yet I only hear it in afternoon and evening. Much the best of his novels that I have heard. Jeanie Deans a truly Christian character, and beautiful, as far as it goes. Yet I have been tempted to bestow some eyesight and time upon it, which should have been better employed." Never scarcely did he lay down these fascinating volumes without repeating his complaint "that they should have so little moral or religious object. They remind me of a giant spending his strength in cracking nuts. I would rather go to render up my account at the last day, carrying up with me 'The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain,' than bearing the load of all those volumes, full as they are of genius."[9]

"You asked me in a former letter," he now wrote

[9] Con. Mem.

to a friend, " whether I was executing the intention I threw out, of endeavouring once more to use my pen for the benefit of my fellow-creatures. Alas, alas,

' Infandum regina jubes.'

I dare not say that procrastination may not have had some share in it; but still the work exists in intention only. Yet I have always had more work on my hands than I could execute satisfactorily, though I have no vested labour to show for it.

" There is one subject on which I am just now deeply interested, and on which I should be glad to exercise your mind. You are aware that a plan is in progress for instructing our artisans in general in the various branches of philosophy. I was friendly to the design, but I have been endeavouring to obtain an addition to it, without which I fear it will be much more injurious than beneficial to the community, that I mean of having lectures on the evidences of the Divine authority of Christianity. I cannot but entertain a strong persuasion, that to instruct any class of men, but especially our artisans of all sorts, in the various branches of philosophy, leaving them altogether ignorant of the grounds on which we rest the Divine authority of Christianity, will be but too sure an expedient for training up a race of self-conceited sceptics. Hitherto our religion has been taken on trust; but now there will be a boast that no opinions are to be received implicitly and by prescription. Indeed it is a Scriptural injunction, that we should be able to render a reason for our hope. And as it has

pleased God to make ours a reasonable service, and to give us a religion which will stand the strictest scrutiny, surely we shall be unpardonable if we suffer our youth to be wholly uninstructed in this particular only."

So strongly did he feel, that "could he have pleased" himself, he "would have published a short piece upon the subject." He was soon privately at work upon it; for the Mechanics' Institutes were followed by the London University, and on its first projectors he at once pressed his views. Instruction in religion, they replied, was incompatible with their first principle of receiving alike men of all faiths or of none. "If you reflect on the composition and plan of our London University," wrote the framer of the scheme,[10] after declaring that his countenance would be of the highest importance to them, "you will perceive how impossible it is to have our doors open to all, and yet teach even the most general system of Christianity. It will not bear near inspection, though it sounds easy enough to say in general terms, all sects agree as to the evidences. They do not so agree. . . . But look to our plan, and you will at once see how inconsistent with it any necessity of religious instruction is. In Oxford and Cambridge it is far otherwise. Oxford and Cambridge take youths wholly under their wing, and away from their families. We, acting on a better and more natural and moral plan, leave them wholly under domestic superintendence. To teach religion is necessary in the former case, but not in the latter."

[10] Aug. 17, 1825.

These arguments he warmly combatted. "I am waiting with no little solicitude the result as to the Christian evidence professorship. The very idea of keeping the most influential class, in the most influential position of our country, ignorant of the irrefragable arguments by which the truth of Christianity is established in order to obtain the support of the Jews, appears to me rendering a measure abominable in itself, still worse by the motive assigned for its adoption."[11] He so far succeeded that a lecture on these subjects for such as chose to attend it was added to the plan. And upon this a friend in London ventured without his permission to put down his name as a supporter of the scheme. But such a compromise by no means contented him; he dreaded education if it was not based upon religion; and though he doubtfully left on his name awhile, in the hope of promoting some change in the system, he declared in 1829 that he must remove it, adding, "I retain my old opinion of the evil of such a system of education."[12]

He continued still at Bath in his usual course of life—surrounded constantly by friends—"making calls above and below,"—complaining that "there never was such an enemy to all business as the water-drinking was to a man with a large circle of acquaintance,"—yet writing a multitude of letters, and hearing with much care no slight quantity of lighter reading. "Hearing Macdonnell's Demerara book—artful and false—Quarterly Review, and Edinburgh—Swiss Per-

[11] Letter to Z. Macaulay Esq. [12] Ib.

secution—an able article by Tom Macaulay on Milton—rather too crowded, but several beautiful and forcible illustrations on colonial policy, &c.—about Claverhouse in Old Mortality—Sheridan's Life by Tom Moore. Moore's gross injustice to Pitt is only what must be expected from party, and indeed the injustice is not known to be such by the dispenser." "Above one third," he tells Mr. Bankes, "of Moore's Life of Sheridan has been read to me. Had I eyesight at command I could with pleasure dilate on that subject. I sometimes wish you and I could compare notes, and that your better memory could aid my fading powers of recollection, for the ascertainment of facts that really ought to be stated. Of Pitt both you and I have probably been often silent, because though disposed to bestow on him more honest praise than nine-tenths of his eulogists, we could not join in the fulsome and general panegyric of those who praised him formerly, and still praise him for their own purposes, and in the way of trade."

With these are mingled other entries full of pregnant intimations of his state of mind. "Butterworth breakfasted; full of matter and good works—all activity; God bless him! Dear Simons in full feather, but too wild, and in prayer too familiar. Saw a delightful letter from Bishop Heber—200 native converts, and he never saw meeker Christians, or of more intense and touching piety." "—— at Jay's, where I greatly wished to go, but thought it wrong." "Octagon—chanting and singing wretched—prayers very disagreeably because not in the least devotionally

read." This ardent love for the Liturgy grew manifestly with his years. He breaks out this winter in a letter to a friend, into a warm expression of his "delight in the principles of our various formularies. Though they are sometimes unconsciously possessed and used, and their nature and qualities often misconceived, and at times calumniated; yet in circumstances of depression and desolation their sanative excellence displays itself like some rich unguent that had been frozen and torpid; they begin to emit their healing fragrance, and to supply an antidote to the poison, that would otherwise consume the vitals." [13]

Leaving Bath in December he spent a few days with Mr. Harford at Blaize Castle; and here "he slid," says his host, "insensibly into continuous descriptions of parliamentary scenes with which he had been connected.

'When Lord Londonderry was in his ordinary mood, he was very tiresome, so slow and heavy, his sentences only half formed, his matter so confined, like what is said of the French army in the Moscow retreat when horse, foot, and carriages of all sorts were huddled together, helter-skelter; yet when he was thoroughly warmed and excited, he was often very fine, very statesman-like, and seemed to rise quite into another man.'

'Our general impression of Sheridan was, that he came to the House with his flashes prepared and ready to let off. He avoided encountering Pitt in unforeseen debating, but when forced to it usually came off well.'

[13] Jan. 12, 1826.

'Fox was often truly wonderful. He would begin at full tear, and roll on for hours together without tiring either himself or us.'

'Pitt talked a great deal among his friends. Fox in general society was quiet and unassuming. Sheridan was a jolly companion, and told good stories, but has been overrated as a wit by Moore.'

'Fox was truly amiable in private life, and great allowance ought to be made for him: his father was a profligate politician, and allowed him as much money to gamble with as ever he wished.'

"I asked him if he remembered the miser Elwes in the House of Commons? 'Perfectly; and that question reminds me of a curious incident which one day befell that strange being. In my younger days we often went to the House in full dress, on nights, for example, when we were any of us going to the opera. Bankes, on an occasion of this kind, was seated next Elwes, who was leaning his head forward just at the moment when Bankes rose hastily to leave his seat, and the hilt of his sword happening to come in contact with the miser's wig, which he had probably picked off some scare-crow, it was unconsciously borne away by Bankes, who walked in his stately way down the House, followed by Elwes full of anxiety to regain his treasure. The House was in a roar of merriment, and for a moment Bankes looked about him wondering exceedingly what had happened. The explanation was truly amusing, when he became conscious of the sword-hilt which he had acquired.'

"As we were one day talking of devotional poetry,

'Dr. Johnson,' said he, 'has passed a very sweeping condemnation on it, and has given his opinion, that success in this species of composition is next to impossible. And the reason which he gives for it is, that all poetry implies exaggeration, but the objects of religion are so great in themselves, as to be incapable of augmentation. One would think however that religion ought to be the very region of poetry. It relates to subjects which, above all others, agitate the hopes and fears of mankind; it embodies every thing that can melt by its tenderness, or elevate by its sublimity; and it has a natural tendency to call forth in the highest degree, feelings of gratitude and thankfulness for inestimable mercies. His prejudice, poor man, appears to me to resolve itself into the same cause, which prevented his deriving comfort from the cultivation of religion. The view which he took of Christianity acted on his fears, it inspired him with terror, it led him to superstition, but it did not animate his affections, and therefore it neither duly influenced his conduct, nor imparted comfort to his feelings.'

"We were talking of the levity and gaiety of heart of the French, even under the severest misfortunes. This drew forth an anecdote, which had been related to him by Mr. Pitt. 'Shortly after the tragical death of Marie Antoinette, M. Perigord, an emigrant of some consequence, who had made Mr. Pitt's acquaintance at Versailles, took refuge in England, and on coming to London went to pay his respects in Downing Street. The conversation naturally turned upon the bloody scenes of the French Revolution; on their

fatal consequences to social order; and in particular on the barbarity with which the unfortunate Queen had been treated. The Frenchman's feelings were quite overcome, and he exclaimed amidst violent sobbing, 'Ah Monsieur Pitt, la pauvre Reine! la pauvre Reine!' These words had scarcely been uttered, when he jumped up as if a new idea suddenly possessed him, and looking towards a little dog which came with him, he exclaimed, 'Cependant, Monsieur Pitt, il faut vous faire voir mon petit chien danser.' Then pulling a small kit out of his pocket, he began dancing about the room to the sound of his little instrument, and calling to the dog, 'Fanchon, Fanchon, dansez, dansez,' the little animal instantly obeyed, and they cut such capers together that the minister's gravity was quite overcome, and he burst into a loud laugh, hardly knowing whether he was most amused or astonished.'"

He was now pressed urgently to come to London, and take the chair at a great meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society, in Freemasons' Hall, on the 21st of December. "Above all we feel the loss of you," wrote Mr. Macaulay, after detailing the difficulties which beset his cause. "Heart-stirring occasions are in prospect, when I should have delighted to see you engaged cominus ense."

He shrunk greatly from this public part now that he had retired from parliament. While he had conducted the cause of Abolition, he had been the prime mover in all operations, and he declared himself unwilling to "take the lead, when I can no longer

direct the measures."[14] "It seems like wishing to retain the reins, when I can no longer hold them."[15] When solicited to take part in the deputations to government, which it had hitherto been his province to conduct, "I am a bee," he playfully replied, "which has lost its sting." To Mr. Stephen he opened himself more fully.[16] "I shrink from these public assemblages, partly perhaps from declining spirits, and that love of ease of which Paley speaks as the natural appetite and gratification of old men, and which it will be many years, I hope, before you begin to verify by your personal experience." Yet rather than throw any damp upon the cause, he yielded to the pressing urgency of friends. "Got to the meeting at twelve. Took the chair. Very kindly treated throughout, both by the very full room, and the speakers."[17]

The "love of ease" never tainted his old age. He had entered private life with the remark, "A man need not be idle because he ceases to be loquacious." "Alas!" he complains at the beginning of the new year,[18] "life is stealing away. It ought to shock me to think how all are at work endeavouring to promote the poor slaves' well-being. But all my friends advised retiring. Well, let me at least try to act in the spirit of that verse of this evening's family reading, 'Be ye always abounding in the work of the Lord.'"

He now occupied until the spring a house at Beckenham, which had been lent him by a friend, where

[14] To R. Wilberforce Esq. Dec. 1. [15] To T. Babington Esq. Dec. 1.
[16] Dec. 5. [17] Diary. [18] *Ib.*

he enjoyed much of that retirement which he so long had coveted. "Few callers here. I have my time more to myself than I can expect almost any where."[19] "May I especially strive against that fatal trifling away part of the closing hour at night. Let me employ an hour in spiritual exercises, prayer, meditation, Scripture reading, and other serious books, as Lives, &c."

Here his rarer intercourse with society was under the same rules as when he moved in the full stream of London life. "Mr. and Mrs W. came in the evening. How little did I improve the opportunity, though indeed I know not what could be done, but to show civility, and that I had no horns or tail!"[20]

Through the Christmas holidays his family all gathered round him; and with them and visits from his friends in London, his time was fully occupied. His thoughts too turned watchfully to the progress of the cause with which his life had been identified; and he was often busy with his pen in guiding the decisions of its chief conductors. "Macaulay giving me useful intelligence. We differing about Female Anti-Slavery Associations. Babington with me, grounding it on St. Paul. I own I cannot relish the plan. All private exertions for such an object become their character, but for ladies to meet, to publish, to go from house to house stirring up petitions—these appear to me proceedings unsuited to the female character as delineated in Scripture. And though we should limit the interference of our ladies to the cause

[19] Diary, Feb. 4. [20] Ib. Feb. 3.

of justice and humanity, I fear its tendency would be to mix them in all the multiform warfare of political life."[21] But though averse to this peculiar scheme he was full of zeal towards the cause; and within a week from writing thus, he replied to his son at Oxford, who had been employed to secure his interest in Mr. Estcourt's favour in the following terms.

"Beckenham, Feb. 6, 1826.

"My dear ——,

* * * * * * * * *

It is really hard on Canning, yet it is honourable in men to vote against a Prime Minister (for such Canning may be termed) on a ground of public principle. But has any attention been paid to Mr. Estcourt's 'holdings' on the Slave Amelioration and Emancipation subjects? Surely there cannot be a more proper question for the University to patronize, than one which involves the continuing 800,000 of our fellow-creatures (our subjects and labourers—forced into our service from their country and friends) in that state of paganism and immorality, in which, to the disgrace of this professedly Christian country, generation after generation has been passing away for near 200 years. It may be of great service to the cause for the University to manifest an interest in its favour. Unhappily, government is under the influence, from personal friendship, of some great West Indian proprietors, and therefore I fear they will not

[21] To T. Babington Esq. Jan. 31.

follow up their own resolutions. As to committing the reform to the colonial legislatures, it is much worse than doing nothing. In 1797, Mr. Ellis, the great West Indian, Canning's best friend, moved an Address to the Crown, recommending reforms in the treatment of slaves, which the House of Commons passed unanimously, and the Secretary of State, avowedly friendly to the West Indians, recommended to the colonial legislatures, enforced by the powerful consideration, (communicated confidentially, but which transpired through a blunder,) that unless they reformed their system, the Abolition of the Slave Trade, which they declared would be ruinous to them, would certainly take place. Yet not one of the thirteen colonial legislatures would do any thing, though so strongly urged; and can they be reasonably expected to make greater reforms, which are brought forward by us hated Abolitionists for the avowed purpose of preparing the way for emancipation, which in their vocabulary is synonymous with destruction? But I am straining my eyes, I trust, needlessly. I cannot doubt, that in Oxford University the slaves will find protectors.

Ever your most affectionate Father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

Some time later he complains to Mr. Macaulay, "just when I was going to read over a second time your most interesting letter, who should enter but one of the most merciless visitors that ever robbed me of a full hour and a half, in the person of my neighbour

Sir C. F. Were such invasions frequent, I must cut and run. I am not so much depressed as some of our friends respecting the state of our cause, though I own I have many gloomy forebodings of mischief in the Antilles; many a dread, lest the Almighty should take the cause of the poor oppressed blacks into his own hands. And really when I hear of the horrors of the French, Spanish, and Portuguese Slave Trades, I involuntarily exclaim, Lord, how long! Surely, surely the abominations will not be much longer tolerated. I have been most indignant on hearing the article on the Slave Trade in the last Quarterly Review. So much shabby complimenting of Canning, and an utter forgetfulness that Castlereagh might have secured the suppression of the existing evils. And even still if Canning would personally speak in a proper tone to the Portuguese and Brazilian ambassadors, much might be done."

His Diary as the year advanced will supply, without any formal connexion, a sketch of his chief movements, and of the tone of his mind and feelings.

"April 10th. The Bishop of —— called on me, and I walked with him till almost four; when I had barely time to write a letter to C. Grant about teaching the Evidences of the Christian Religion to the young men educating for writers. Greatly pleased with ——; he in a very emphatic manner begged my prayers, and said he should reckon much on them." They were promised; "and never since," he said shortly before his death, "to the best of my belief, omitted for a single day."

"12th. Hearing the Workhouse Boy's Letters, given me by Mrs. Samuel Hoare. Oh how humiliating they are, when I reflect on the few advantages he had enjoyed, and the improvement made of them! But what a blessed proof of the grace of God! What religion but Christianity can produce such blessed effects—such extinction of self—such a desire to please God—to perform the relative duties to his unkind father—such elevation of soul, with so little knowledge!

"22nd. Bath. Hearing Old Mortality after dinner; the story of the Covenanters. It has made me sit up too late, and interested me too deeply; oimoi! Scott is certainly a distinct exhibiter of human characters and affections. But I hope his delineation of the Cameronians is too dark, and more especially his making them scruple at no means when the end is good (as, wronging Edith Bellenden of her right to buy the old hypocritical scoundrel Basil Oliphant).

"23rd. At —— chapel. C. rather affectedly solemn, evangelical, but as if trying to give weight by language and manner to what was in itself unsubstantial.

"26th. Heard some of Rob Roy; but a mere novel so far—vol. i.

"30th. Morning, M. good matter, but too theatrical. Afternoon, Harvey Marriot excellent, simple, grave, impressive.

"May 1st. To my surprise in came Joseph Gurney, who on a professional tour.

"2nd. Finished Rob Roy, the last volume of which is very graphical, and gives a striking picture of High-

land feeling and manners about 1716, also the consequential airs of a naturally brave, good-natured Glasgow Baillie—a true commercial man. His ways finely contrasted with the rude, proud, shrewd, and harsh manners of the Highland chief. A good picture too of the feuds of those times.

"3rd. Began Peveril of the Peak, because it gives, I am told, a picture of the Oliverian times.

"5th. Mr. Johnson breakfasted, and gave me much interesting intelligence about Ireland. Evening, Butterworth called, and gave me interesting missionary intelligence. 6th. Archdeacon Digby breakfasted. and much talk till twelve o'clock, when a public meeting for relief of manufacturers. They wished me to move the resolutions, but I declined in favour of a Bath man—subscribed £25. Joseph Gurney came in afternoon to stay till Monday. Evening, Butterworth also, and Mr. White, New Zealand missionary—a most interesting evening. Hearing from White how he and his companions proceeded on their first arrival, and the dangers to which they were exposed—their lives suspended on the vibrating beams of the balance. With Joseph Gurney to the Quakers' meeting. We first sat still (they all with their hats on) for about twenty minutes. Then Gurney slowly rose, and prayed for about five minutes an opening prayer. Then he preached as we should say for about an hour (no text, and for want perhaps of divisions it appeared rambling, and left no deposit, only impression). Then after a short pause he prayed about ten minutes, and after a short pause notice given that service at six, and neigh-

bours shook hands with each other. We all came away thankful that not Quakers. No Scripture reading. No common prayer. The *prayer* himself kneels, the rest stand. Afternoon to —— chapel; an excellent, sound sermon.

" 8th. Breakfast—Count R.—and Mr. D. a good-natured but molesting man: a soi-disant poet, truly pious; but whimsical, and writes doggerel verses.

" 12th. Heard from dear Lord —— of his son's death, but in such a state of mind as to cause joy as well as peace.

" 15th. Finished Peveril—the humours of the versatile, unprincipled Buckingham—the acuteness of Charles—his easiness of temper; unprincipled, wild, and variable as the winds, admirably delineated. The cavalier character in broad and strong colours—well done, but no nicety. I am glad we have finished the work; this class of writings is too interesting; it makes other studies insipid, or rather other light reading; but yet much to be learned from this class of writings, which I will state in a separate piece.

" 23rd. Going to Claverton to dinner, meaning to see the neighbouring woods and hear the nightingales. Drew —— into talk, wishing to learn if the Tomlines had said any thing to her about Pitt's religion, but they had said nothing, and she fairly owned she durst not ask them about it.

" 27th. Busy, getting off for Clifton." A letter written the same evening gives a happy sketch of this " getting off " from Bath.

"Clifton, May 27.

"My dear ——,

Your letter found us in what have been termed, with scarcely any exaggeration, 'the horrors of departure.' All the callings, the leave-takings, the apologies for the omission of both, and all the other external and internal variety and complication of social contrivances for manifesting civility, and wasting time, and diminishing comfort; and to close the whole, bill upon bill, and new claims coming forward, when you supposed all had been satisfied, while the supplies which you expected to carry away with you grow less and less, and you doubt if you shall have enough to go off like an honest man.

"I did not take up my pen to call on you to sympathize with my miseries, but writing to a friend—and my very dear —— has enabled me to address him in that character—is like talking to him, and in such têtes-à-têtes I always observe that if we are in circumstances which allow us to obey the natural impulse we begin by relating our grievances; but I came from the drawing-room to reply to your letter. Your times and places are likely to be peculiarly agreeable to us, in that they would bring you to us about the time of our settling at Highwood; and coming first to reside in a new house, without any of her children round her, would be very likely to infuse into your mother's spirits a secret melancholy, which might sadden the whole scene. It quite grieves me to think that we are not

to be long together; but let us do right and all will be well. Farewell. God be with you.

Ever your affectionate Father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

On the 15th of June he took possession of his house at Highwood Hill, with the characteristic entry—"Late when got home, and had a too hasty prayer for first settlement in a new house—all in confusion." He was now here only for a week, and then went on into Suffolk. "22nd. Reached Ampton—the place in the highest possible beauty—an exquisite oasis. Saw the infant school, and great improvements of the place. The family hymn and prayer very pleasing.

"July 1st. Lord Rocksavage and Mr. Calcraft came to dinner and stay. My 'Practical View' I am told first made useful to Calcraft, a very superior man. It is delightful to see men in such high connexions becoming truly Christian. D. too is an excellent young man, but of an unfortunate appearance, soft and effeminate in voice and manner—tongue too large for mouth.

"9th. The sacrament. I had a delightful Sunday solitary walk.

"20th. To Norwich, and called at the palace. The old Bishop 82 ætat—quite clear and animated—scarcely a wrinkle—his memory very remarkable."

On the 22nd of August he was fixed at Highwood Hill. The next day, Aug. 23rd, "Mr. Mark Robinson came in the evening, and I forced to ask

him to stay all night. Much talk about a wish of his to establish Church Methodism, in opposition to the aristocracy of the Conference. A sensible Yorkshire tradesman, speaking true East Riding in sounds. His plan if it could be carried into effect, excellent, but we ought to hear what can be said e contra. He with others who have deserted him, had engaged for three chapels in Beverley, Cherry Burton, and Woodmansea.

"26th. Dined at Samuel Hoare's at Hampstead, with Dr. and Mrs. Lushington, and William Allen, who still goes on doing good. Miss Joanna Baillie came in the evening—so like the Doctor, as quite to affect me. Dr. Lushington acting a most important part in changing the condition of the coloured class through the whole West Indies, by contending against the oppression exercised towards Lecesne and D'Escoffery. Oh what a glorious thing it is for a man to be a member of a free country! He and Miss Baillie were asked if they believed in a particular Providence. 'Yes,' they replied, 'on great occasions.' As unphilosophical as unscriptural—must not the smallest links be as necessary for maintaining the continuity, as the greatest? Great and little belong to our littleness, but there is no great and little to God."[22]

A letter from his correspondence with his children, will carry on this sketch into the following year.

"Feb. 19, 1827.[23]

"My very dear ——,

It quite cheers me to hear that we are likely to see you so soon; though in all such cases I rejoice

[22] Diary, Aug. [23] To a son, ætat 22.

with trembling. Mr. Leslie Forster, M. P. for Louth county, who has been staying here, was at Fife House by appointment on Saturday, when a servant came into the room where he was waiting, and told him that Lord Liverpool could not be seen that day. The newspapers will probably state that having been remarkably well, he was suddenly seized by apoplexy or palsy, (found on the floor, his countenance convulsed, and he insensible,) so that his political life must be at an end. I fear Canning also is more seriously indisposed than I had hoped. It always affects me deeply, when either from advancing years, or sudden illness, this world appears to be slipping out of the grasp of an eminent public man, who (we have reason to fear) has been making too little preparation for his entrance into another. Lord Liverpool, I trust, had serious thoughts. I well remember the former Lady Liverpool's telling me at the Pavilion, many years ago, that she and Lord Liverpool used to contend, each for the favourite of each, Pascal or Fenelon; and Pascal is an author who has many 'pregnant propositions,' as Lord Bacon calls them.—I must stop.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

The chief feature of 1827, was a progress which he made after an interval of almost twenty years through his native county.

He had a strong wish, as he told one of his contemporaries, "to revisit the scenes of his childhood and early youth;"[24] a purpose which, unless accom-

[24] To T. Thompson Esq. June 13.

plished speedily, he could never hope to realize. But as yet he was able to renew his acquaintance with "his early haunts" with undiminished pleasure; and from Yoxall Lodge, where he halted for a time, he wrote to Mr. Stephen—"Well as I thought I knew this place, and much as I had admired it, I never saw its riches displayed in such overflowing profusion. I never was here before till late in the year, or saw the first foliage of the magnificent oak contrast with the dark holly, the flowering gorse, and the horse-chesnut." "A fine tree always seems to me like a community in itself, with the countless insects which it shelters and nourishes in its roots and branches. It is quite a merciful ordination of Providence, that the forests of our country (to which as a maritime nation we look for protection and commerce) should be so admirable for their beauty. Instead of a beautiful ornament, they might have been a disagreeable object, to which we were compelled to be indebted."[25]

"This country" [he was passing through Derbyshire] "has been greatly improved during the last forty years, and so long it is since I was here last, by the growth of extensive woods on the sides of hills which had been barren."[26] Other alterations, calling up far deeper feelings, soon occupied his mind. He had reached a time of life when recollections of the past are interwoven with the thought of long-departed friends. "Poor Pitt dead above twenty-one years," he says this summer, "to-day he would have been sixty-eight." The death of Mr. Canning turned

[25] Con. Mem. [26] To J. Stephen Esq.

his thoughts into the same channel. "Oh what a lesson is it on the vanity of placing our chief views of happiness on this uncertain world!"[27] Many of his letters are coloured more or less by the same tone of thought. "Whatever span of life may yet be left to us," he said to Hannah More,[28] "may we both be using our remaining days in preparation for the last. My friends are daily dropping around me. The companions of my youth, then far stronger and more healthy than I was, are worn out, while I still remain." And to Mr. Babington he says, "When you last wrote to me, you were under the influence of a feeling that has of late been often called into exercise with me also; that which is excited by seeing our old friends dropping off one after another while we are left behind.

> 'Hæc data pœna diu viventibus, ut renovata
> Semper clade domus, multisque in luctibus, inque
> Perpetuo mœrore et nigra veste senescant.'

But how different are the emotions with which we may regard the deaths of our friends from those of the heathen poet! And it is one of the indirect rewards of such religious principles and habits as lead us to select our friends from the excellent ones of the earth, that we are not compelled to seek for comfort by forgetting the companions of our choice that are taken from us, but may follow them in our thoughts and sympathies into that paradise into which we trust they have been received, and may hope at no distant period to see them once more."

[27] Diary. [28] May 5.

Something too of the same tone, blended touchingly with the liveliest affections, may be traced in a letter to a son on the continent.

"York, July 22, Sunday, at Mr. Gray's, a true Christian and old friend.

"My very dear ——,

It fills my heart with thankfulness, to be assured that my dear children are on this day withdrawn from worldly occupations. I fancy to myself my dear, my very dear ——, (for dear at home becomes very dear abroad,) calling up before his mind's eye the images of absent friends, and I am encouraged by a better feeling than vanity, to cherish the hope that your old father has a place among them. Even were it a common day, (a week day as it is termed,) writing to you at such a distance, when the thought that perhaps even at the very time in which I am addressing you, you may be no more, the thoughts and feelings of my heart would naturally be of a serious colour; and when in relation to all my friends present or absent, my mind on this day is conversant with their highest interests, it must be peculiarly so in communicating with a very dear child who is perhaps a thousand miles off, and of whom I have not heard for several weeks. Whilst thinking of your geographical track, if I may so term it, I am led to the idea of your spiritual track—your *track home*, as it is phrased on the globes in the line that describes the voyages of our great circumnavigators. My mind has been the rather drawn to this reflection by

yesterday's having been the birth-day of our beloved and, I confidently hope, sainted Barbara—already joined by our sweet little grandchild. There is something very affecting to my mind in this way of considering life, as a voyage in which 'track out' and 'track home' designate its opposite periods of youth and old age. Oh what cause have I for gratitude in the blessed influences of the Divine Spirit which has directed your course, and kept you from the rocks on which many, alas! make shipwreck! And He will still I trust watch over, and guide, and guard you even unto the end; and if it be consistent with the Divine will, may I be spared to see you engaged in that most dignified of all services, that of superintending the best interests of your fellow-creatures, and guiding and guarding them through this dangerous world to the haven of everlasting happiness and peace, to the rest that remaineth for the people of God. May God bless you. I am ever

Your most affectionate Father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

These feelings were called into the liveliest exercise as he passed on through Yorkshire. Here and there indeed he found still left those who had entered life with him. At Huddersfield, amongst "others, Smart came in, an honest, warm-hearted shopkeeper, originally from Hull—knew me when himself a boy—remembered the ox roasted whole,[29] &c.—the joke about my dear sister"[30]—and such

[29] At the time of his coming of age, A. D. 1780. [30] Diary.

were always gladly welcomed; but the greater part were gone. Even in the Cloth Halls where he was received enthusiastically, it was by another generation of men; and while he felt a natural warmth of heart at "living it thus over again on the old ground and in the old circles where his youthful days were spent, and where his memorial will endure with the soil, and be reverenced from generation to generation;"[31] yet other thoughts would mingle with these pleasurable feelings. "How many far stronger and healthier than I, died early, while I still survive in spite of Warren's statement thirty-nine years ago! The two St. Johns and Chaplin—Acklom, whose place we passed—George Anderson, died in 1784, Sir Edmund, 1799, ætat forty. It is very affecting to me to inquire after numbers of my contemporaries, and hear, 'O he has been long gone'—or, 'He died years ago,'—men commonly far younger and stronger than myself." "I have not time to state to you the reflections suggested by our visit to Wentworth House. But it is a topic on which I shall like to expatiate a little at some future opportunity. I will now only say it is quite a palace, and the whole apparatus in proportion. The domestic chaplain, a truly good, and from age a venerable man, told me that they dined daily in the servants' hall about seventy-six of Lord Fitzwilliam's own household."[32]

No visit gave him greater pleasure. "Lord Fitzwilliam," he says at the time,[33] "is all benevolence;

[31] Letter from James Montgomery Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq. Aug. 17.
[32] Letter to S. Wilberforce Esq.
[33] Diary.

really there is a seraphic benignity about him." And to Mr. Stephen, who had expressed his gratification at this kind reception, adding in allusion to the watchword of the great election, "Milton a plumper," "I myself if I had a vote would give your quondam opponent a plumper for it."[34] He replies from Wentworth House:

"My dear Stephen,

I can truly say that the magnitude, wealth, and industrious population of our vast county, have made me feel even more than when I represented it in parliament the importance of the trust then committed to my care. The cordiality and kindness with which I have been received at this place (Wentworth House) has deeply affected me. Lord Fitzwilliam might well have been forgiven if he had conceived an unconquerable antipathy to me. When I was first elected county member it was in defiance of his old hereditary interest—I, a mere boy, (but twenty-four,) without a single acquaintance in the county, and not allowing him the recommendation even of one member, though with Sir George Savile's family connexion and name superadded to the Rockingham interest. And then I must have appeared to him to be identified with Mr. Pitt, against whom, not altogether without cause, he had conceived a deadly hostility, even imputing to him, (though this was not merely different from the truth, but opposite to it,) that Pitt had from the first disliked him. Yet in spite of all

[34] To William Wilberforce Esq.

repelling principles so strongly has worked the general kindliness of his nature, that he, the old gentleman, (gentleman I may truly term him, for a finer gentleman cannot be conceived,) has behaved to us with an unaffected, unassuming friendliness, that at times has brought tears into my eyes. It has really brought powerfully to my feelings that better state in which all misconstructions will be done away, and all truly good men will love one another."

With Wentworth House his tour concluded. It had included every part of Yorkshire, and been entirely prosperous. Not the least pleasing feature he had noticed as he passed on, was the improved religious character he traced among the clergy. "I hear, thank God, a highly satisfactory report of it; it is solid and Scriptural, not fanatical or tinctured with partiality. A fault by the way which I never so well understood as of late years."[35]

On the 3rd of October, after looking "into R. Ramsden's Museum," and dropping "a sovereign into his missionary box," he travelled on "to Northampton to breakfast. The day charming, and reached Highwood Hill at half-past nine in safety, and found all there well. What cause for thankfulness, after above six months' absence and thirty-six visits!"[36]

[35] Oct. 4. [36] Diary.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

OCTOBER 1827 TO APRIL 1832.

Settlement at Highwood—First feelings—Mode of spending his day—Love of flowers—Business—Evenings—Conversation—Society—Letters descriptive of his life—Bishop of Calcutta—Lord Byron—Visit to London—Anniversaries—Southey—Marriage of his third son—Sussex—His chapel—Opposed by Mr. Williams—His temper under falsehood and abuse—Reduction of his income—Anti-Slavery Society—His religious character at this time.

He returned to Highwood in the height of the "Indian summer." The next morning was "delightful, dewy like autumn, but the sun full out and warm as summer."[1] This was a very picture of his state of mind, with some of the dews of autumn, but still brightened by a noon-day sun. He had not yet become familiar with his Highwood residence, and his return to it not unnaturally weighed somewhat on his spirits. "It is so long since I was here that I really feel a stranger in my own house. As yet we have not got our things about us; and I know not where those are which have been sent at different times. For the last six months we have lived as if such matters were

[1] Diary, Oct. 4.

the natural produce of houses, just as grass is that of the earth; and as I have had little leisure lately for reading, or rather for hearing, my life has been spent in chatteration, and I feel strangely awkward in returning to my ordinary duties. My spirits quite sink at the idea of being here when my boys leave me. Oh how I long for a quiet lodging any where, where I might live as a collegian, having every thing found for me, and I only trying to do a little good with what poor powers are left me, and to work out my own salvation! Oh let me not distrust that mercy of God which has never failed me. I want to allot a day to devotional exercises."[2]

These were not his habitual feelings; they were the diapason tones of a mind of infinite compass; but for the most part his later years were eminently bright and cheerful. Never indeed was he more evidently happy than in that calm old age on which he entered with the elasticity of youth, and the simplicity of childhood. Gay, busy, social, and affable, tender without softness, and witty without sting, he was still the delight of old and young; and whether he was joining in the "animated talk amongst the young hands," or discoursing with his remaining equals, it was in the busiest and happiest groups that he was always to be found. His days at Highwood were very regularly spent. He rose soon after seven, spent the first hour and a half in his closet; then dressed, hearing his reader for three quarters of an hour, and by half-past nine met his household for

[2] Letter to J. Stephen Esq. and Diary, Oct. 4.

family worship; always a great thing in his esteem. At this he read a portion of the Scriptures, generally of the New Testament, in course, and explained and enforced it, often with a natural and glowing eloquence, always with affectionate earnestness, and an extraordinary knowledge of God's word.

After family prayers, which occupied about half an hour, he never failed to sally forth for a few minutes

"To take the air and hear the thrushes sing."

He enjoyed this stroll exceedingly. "A delightful morning. Walked out and saw the most abundant dew-drops sparkling in the sunbeams on the gazon. How it calls forth the devotional feelings in the morning when the mind is vacant from worldly business, to see all nature pour forth, as it were, its song of praise to the great Creator and Preserver of all things! I love to repeat Psalms civ. ciii. cxlv. &c. at such a season."[3]

His habits had long since been formed to a late hour of breakfast. During his public life his early hours alone were undisturbed, and he still thought that meeting late tended to prolong in others the time of morning prayer and meditation. Breakfast was still prolonged and animated by his unwearied powers of conversation, and when congenial friends were gathered round him, their discussions lasted sometimes till noon. From the breakfast-room he went till post time to his study, where he was commonly employed long about his letters. If they were finish-

[3] Diary, Oct. 23.

ed he turned to some other business, never enduring to be idle all the day. "H. is a man," he says after a wholly interrupted morning, "for whom I feel unfeigned esteem and regard, but it quite molests me to talk for a whole morning. Nothing done, and no accession of intellect."[4] Soon after his retirement he was invited as an idle man to an amateur concert. "What!" he exclaimed, "music in a morning? Why it would be as bad as dram-drinking." Yet his love for music was as strong as ever. This very year he speaks of himself as "quite overpowered by the Hallelujah Chorus in the Messiah,' a flood of tears ensued, and the impression on my mind remained through the day."[5] But a long-continued conscientious use of time had stamped its value deeply on his mind, and he could not forbear expressing his compassion when he "called at T.'s and saw the poor idle young man."[6] He was planning in this leisure season some further employment of his pen; a work on the Epistles of St. Paul, especially. "I have read Whateley's Essays on Scripture Difficulties. That on St. Paul's Epistles exactly my own thoughts twenty years ago, and often about to be published." Weak health and his infirmity of sight still defeated his intention, and neither this work nor an additional chapter to that on Christianity, in which he wished to address the old, were ever actually completed for the press.

About three o'clock, when the post was gone, he sallied forth into the garden, humming often to

[4] Diary July 14, 1830. [5] Ib. Oct. 9, 1828. [6] Diary.

himself, in the gladness of his heart, some favourite tune, alone, or in the company of some few friends, or with his reader. Here he would pace up and down some sheltered sunny walk, rejoicing especially in one which had been formed for him by a son, and was called ever after, with some hint of affection, by his name.

"The picture which the dead leave on the minds of their survivors," says Mr. Gurney,[7] "is not always lively or distinct. Although we may have fondly loved them, and may hallow the memory of their good qualities, we cannot always summon their image before us; but I venture to express my conviction, that no one who has been accustomed to observe Wilberforce will ever find the slightest difficulty in picturing him on the tablet of the mind. Who that knew him, can fail to recall the rapid movements of his somewhat diminutive form, the illumination of his expressive countenance, and the nimble finger with which he used to seize on every little object which happened to adorn or diversify his path? Much less can we forget his vivacious wit—so playful, yet so harmless; the glow of his affections; the urbanity of his manners; and the wondrous celerity with which he was ever wont to turn from one bright thought to another. Above all, however, his friends will never cease to remember that peculiar sunshine which he threw over a company by the influence of a mind perpetually tuned to love and praise. I am ready to think there could be no greater luxury than that of

[7] Mem.

roaming with him in solitude over green fields and gardens, and drawing out of his treasury things new and old."

This was most true of his hour of daily exercise. Who that ever joined him in it cannot see him as he walked round his garden at Highwood? Now in animated and even playful conversation, and then drawing from his copious pockets (to contain Dalrymple's State Papers was their standard measure) some favourite volume or other; a Psalter, a Horace, a Shakespeare, or Cowper, and reading, and reciting, or 'refreshing' passages; and then catching at long-stored flower-leaves as the wind blew them from the pages, or standing before a favourite gum cistus to repair the loss. Then he would point out the harmony of the tints, the beauty of the pencilling, the perfection of the colouring, and run up all into those ascriptions of praise to the Almighty which were ever welling forth from his grateful heart. He loved flowers with all the simple delight of childhood. He would hover from bed to bed over his favourites; and when he came in, even from his shortest walk, deposited a few that he had gathered, safely in his room before he joined the breakfast table. Often would he say as he enjoyed their fragrance, "How good is God to us! What should we think of a friend who had furnished us with a magnificent house and all we needed, and then coming in to see that all had been provided according to his wishes, should be hurt to find that no scents had been placed in the rooms? Yet so has God dealt with us. Surely flowers are the smiles of His goodness."

He staid out till near dinner, which was never after five, and early in the evening lay down for an hour and a half. He would then rise for a new term of existence, and sparkle through a long evening to the astonishment of those who expected, at his time of life, to see his mind and spirits flag, even if his strength was not exhausted. The whole evening was seldom spent in conversation, for he had commonly some book in "family reading" which was a text for multiplied digressions full of incident and illustration. His own hand has drawn a picture of these rational and happy evenings.

"I did not put down my pen," he concludes a letter, after annexing as the date "Friday night, forty minutes after eleven,"[8] "till the announcement of dinner rendered it necessary. After dinner I lay down, and through the kind care of my friends was suffered to sleep, as too commonly it happens, for an hour and three quarters.[9] I then came down, and after a little business heard the young Macaulays read passages from one of those numerous Annuals which the wealth and animation of the present day supplies for interesting the faculties without labour or effort. We went to prayers, and after about half an hour, surely well spent, we returned to the common room and renewed our reading, which I just now stopped, finding how late it was, and being in the singularly favoured circumstances of an old fellow, who is allowed to say 'Come or

[8] To Rev. R. I. Wilberforce, Feb. 26, 1830.

[9] An hour and half was his regular time, which he was rather jealous of exceeding.

go, do this or do that,' without the appearance of fretfulness. Then —— by saying, 'Surely you will not think of finishing your letter at so late an hour,' reminded me that it was still on the stocks, and was to be launched into the post stream to-morrow morning. I owe however so much respect to her reasonable remonstrances, as to endeavour to abridge all that I might have added, if I had taken up my pen in more favourable circumstances.

"One word of what we have been reading—an article in one of the Annuals on Gibbon and Madame de Stael, and latterly also on Voltaire.' You remember, I doubt not, the last sentence in Gibbon's Autobiography; I have engaged my young friend to write under it Dr. Watts's beautiful hymn, ending with the line—'Foretells a bright rising again.' This is one of the 'Hymns for Children,' but surely it is for the children of God, for the heirs of glory; and when you compare it either in point of good sense, or imagination, or sterling value, or sustaining hope, with the considerations and objects which feed the fancy, or exercise the understanding or affections, of the most celebrated men who have engaged the attention or called forth the eulogiums of the literati of the last century, you are irresistibly forced to exclaim in the spirit of my grand favourite,

'O happy hymnist, O unhappy bard!'

"Farewell, my dear ——.

Ever affectionately yours,

W. Wilberforce."

As the evening wore away his thoughts took commonly this colour. "After prayers as he walked up and down the room, he would have read to him missionary accounts, and journals of what was done by foreign Christians."[10] This was his usual Sunday evening reading. "It is the most deeply interesting of all subjects, to observe how the contest is going on, between light and darkness, what different spots of this rebellious province are being brought into subjection to their rightful Sovereign."[11]

A few more of his remarks during this visit have been preserved by the same hand. "What light it throws upon the philosophy of the human mind in its present fallen state, that while the writings of Rousseau, Voltaire, D'Alembert, &c. abounded in sentimentality and supposed refinement, they actually prepared the way for all the horrors of the Revolution. The guillotine was in perpetual operation at the very time when these books were so read and admired." "I heard much of the state of France from Sir James Mackintosh, when he visited it during the short peace. He came back full of information, and sparkling like the fire-fly." He then spoke of his own early visit to Paris, of the splendour of the court, and the fascinations of Marie Antoinette. "But they did not much attract me," he said, "they were not enough of a moral kind." Then taking up a nutmeg from the table, "How wonderful," he exclaimed, "are the works of God, in enduing with such a scent a mere piece of dust!"

[10] Nov. 1827, Mem. of a friend. [11] Con. Mem.

His love of books was still extreme. Though he could read little continuously he would pick out the pith of most works by a rapid glancing through the pages, and in every house he visited, he knew commonly within two days the full amount of its literary stores. His great complaint against his feeble eyesight was that it prevented his maintaining an accurate acquaintance with the great writers of antiquity. There were few modern works which he did not either thus run through, or have read to him, except "mere novels;" and his short criticisms show how little the acuteness of his mind was blunted. "Reading Lawrie Todd, but disliked and left it off—a stupidly told story—attempt at delineations of character very indifferently executed—no touches of nature or marked discriminations. Hearing Hallam's Constitutional History of England in Quarterly. Southey a bitter critic, and works him with great acuteness and force." "Hearing Lord Orford's Memoirs of George the Second's reign—very bitter, and prejudices great, yet accounts curious." "Scott's novels useful as the works of a master in general nature, and illustrative of the realities of past life. Looked at Pelham—most flippant, wicked, unfeeling delineations of life—to read such scenes without being shocked must be injurious. I am sorry —— read it. For very shame I would not have it read to me." "We finished Sir Jonah Barrington's Autobiography. A true picture of a thorough man of the world, who professing to believe in Christianity, shows throughout his whole life not one single reference in thought or feeling, word or deed, to any

Scriptural principle or precept. On the other hand, Scripture says, 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God.'" [12]

In such occupations as these he would go on till very late; for from long use in parliament "the midnight hour was his zenith, and like the beautiful cereus with all her petals expanded, he was then in full bloom." [13] This was especially the case when old and valued friends had gathered round him. Old age had scarcely lessened his relish for society, but it had drawn still closer the bonds of his affection for his early friends. "As I grow older," he told Mr. Gisborne, "I find myself growing more attached to such of the companions of my youth as are still left to me; and they are, I need not say, still more valued, when they are such as we may humbly hope we shall meet again in a better world." [14] "When I was a younger man I was tempted to make intellectual conversation my all in all; but now I can truly say, that I prefer the society of the simplest person who fears God, to the best company of a contrary kind." [15] This happy preference was the result of early watchfulness. After receiving a "very clever and entertaining man" many years before, "I must record the truth," he says, "I seldom have found myself more unspiritual, more indisposed to prayer, than after my party had left me. I could not somehow raise my mind to heavenly objects, alas, and so it has been partly this morning also. Is it that the society of an able worldly man is here-

[12] Diary, Dec. 13.
[13] Mr. Gurney's Mem.
[14] Feb. 18, 1830.
[15] Con. Mem.

by indicated to be unsafe to me? I had a sort of struggle about inviting him, as if intimating the wish to be acquainted with an irreligious man, was showing too great a deference for talent. Is it as a punishment that I have since felt so cold and wandering in my mind? I would not be nervous and superstitious, but I ought to watch and keep my heart with all diligence. O let me deal honestly with myself. Let me give up, however entertaining, even however instructive, whatever it seems the intimation of God that I should relinquish. O Lord, cause me to be so full of love, and zeal, and grateful loyalty, and child-like affection for my Saviour, that I may love them that love Thee; and may I thus become more in my tempers and frames of mind an inhabitant of heaven."[16]

In great measure had this prayer been answered. "Do invite —— to come and see you," was the request this year of some of his family, naming one of the first men of the age for intellectual powers. He made no answer at the moment, but said afterwards in private, "I am sorry not to do what you wish, but so false and hollow as I think the man, I could have no comfort in his company. Only think what truth is; it is the very principle of gravitation in the moral world." Yet there was nothing of austerity about him. The playfulness of his good-tempered humour would often gild even serious remarks. "In the afternoon heard Mr. ——. A true sermon of his school, *made to the receipt*."[17] "Good old Mr. C.

[16] Journal.

[17] Diary.

preached—uniformly rapid, like a watch-hand when the spring-chain broke." "What a world of peace and happiness would it be if every body were like Lord ——! Yet I must confess there is a certain degree of dulness about him. It would be a sort of Prayer-book and Homily Society temperature, if the world were made of such." "I sat next to D. who gives you the idea of a great mental eater with a defective digestion."[18]

Thus did he continue from year to year exhibiting to another generation what had lately struck Lord Milton as the most instructive feature in his character, "the close union between the most rigid principles, and the most gay and playful disposition."[19] "May you be spared," was the desire of Dr. Chalmers, "to spend among us a long old age of piety and peace. May you still," he goes on, "have many days of rest, and of rejoicing on the borders of heaven. And may that book which spoke powerfully to myself, and has spoken powerfully to thousands, represent you to future generations, and be the instrument of converting many who are yet unborn."[20]

It is not a little interesting to trace the impression he now made on those who staid with him at Highwood. "I remember," says the present Bishop of Calcutta, "his walking with me up and down his

[18] Con. Mem.

[19] Letter to J. Stephen Esq. Nov. 12, 1830. The writers feel more deeply than any who may read these pages, that to this great and leading feature of Mr. Wilberforce's character, they have been unable to do any justice in the necessary coldness of description.

[20] Rev. Dr. Chalmers to W. Wilberforce Esq. Jan. 22, 1828.

drawing-room some time beyond midnight; his figure is now in my mind, his benevolent eye, his kind, considerate manner of speaking, his reverence for Scripture, his address, the pauses he made in his walk when he had any thing emphatic to say. I recollect one sentiment was, that the passages so frequent in Scripture, importing the unwillingness of the Almighty that the sinner should perish, the invitations addressed to him to return, the remonstrances with him on his unbelief, &c. must be interpreted strictly and literally, or they would appear to be a mockery of man's misery, and to involve the most fearful imputations on the Divine character. Evasions of the force of such passages were, he thought, highly injurious, and went to sap the whole evidence and bearing of the Christian revelation.

"He had a delicate yet penetrating and microscopic insight into character. Observations minute, accurate, graphical, and often with a tinge of humour, dropped from him in conversation, and when quiet in his family he would imitate the voice and manner of the person he was describing (generally some public man) in a way to provoke profuse merriment. Then he would check himself and throw in some kind remark. His charity indeed in judging of others, is a trait in his Christian character, which forces itself on my recollection. Of his benevolence I need not speak; but his kind construction of doubtful actions, his charitable language towards those from whom he most widely differed, his thorough forgetfulness of little affronts, were fruits of that general benevolence

which continually appeared. The nearer you observed him the more the habit of his mind appeared obviously to be modest and lowly. He was in as little measure as possible elated by the love and esteem of almost the whole civilized world, which long before his death had been fixed upon him. It required some management to draw him out in conversation, and therefore some of those who saw him only once, might go away disappointed. But if he was lighted up, and in a small circle, where he was entirely at his ease, his powers of conversation were prodigious; a natural eloquence was poured out, strokes of gentle playfulness and satire fell on all sides, and the company were soon absorbed in admiration. It commonly took only one visit to gain over the most prejudiced stranger."

The following letter is an instance of this kind. Its writer came to Highwood Hill prejudiced against him by some who had maligned his character. After spending two days at the house, she wrote to a sister.

"Highwood Hill, April 12, 1828.

"You would hardly believe, my dear sister, that I find it much more difficult to write from this quiet country place, than from London. Yet I have thought of you more than ever, and how have I wished for you here, where there is so much that would interest and charm you! It is now past twelve, yet I am sitting up to finish what I began this morning; in no one moment before have I been able to do so, and I write after such a fatiguing day, that I feel as if all

my powers of expressing myself were gone. Indeed I think I have been in a delirium all the time that I have staid here, from the excitement of being happier than for a long time past. Yet my happiness cannot be complained of, as it has consisted so much in watching the admirable conduct and feelings, and listening to the excellent conversation, which appears to bring religion more near to the heart, and the heart more near to God.

"I can perfectly believe that those who have not seen Mr. Wilberforce in his own house, among his own family, and who have heard all the stories that have been told of him, may not give credit to the sincerity and purity of his intentions, but no one could see him as I have done without being charmed. I wish I could send you something of what I have heard in the beautifully simple explanations that he gives every day of a chapter that he reads from the Testament. Then if you could hear him reading, as he does, the poems in the 'Christian Year!' I shall have much to tell you at some future time, of sentiments and ideas of his, all so beautiful, and so true, and so indulgent, for I think nothing more striking in him than that spirit of general benevolence which governs all that he says; joined to the extreme beauty of his voice, it does indeed make him appear 'to love whatever he speaks of.' Then he seems so thoroughly pleased to hear any anecdote in praise of any person who is talked about, and so ready to make allowance in others for the faults that he has not a taint of himself. Oh he

is a dear, good, admirable old man! I have been praying that I may be enabled to imitate whatever is imitable in this excellent being; his talents and attractions are not to be acquired, but is it not a cheering reflection that such principles as his may be gained by all?"

This desire of finding some favourable points in every character was noticed by his neighbour Lady Raffles in a striking instance. "I spent a few days," she says, "at his house, just after Moore's Life of Lord Byron was published. I brought it with me from Murray's, and read parts of it to him at night, while he was pacing up and down the room with all the quickness and gaiety of a child. What struck me particularly, was his anxiety to find out any thing in Lord Byron's favour. 'There now,' he would stop and exclaim, 'surely there is good feeling there!'"

One other frequent occupation of his time at Highwood is too characteristic to be omitted. Assistance to young men of promise had always been with him a favourite charity, and the inclination had been strengthened by the evident harvest he had sometimes reaped. To have been one of the first who assisted Kirke White would have been reward enough; but he had seen two others, who owed all to him, fill with credit different judicial stations; and at this very time the highest honours of one of our Universities were obtained by two young men, for whose education he had in like manner assisted to provide. But now that he had time, he gave more than merely

money; he made his house the home of one or two youths, the expense of whose education he defrayed; all their holidays were spent with him; and hours of his own time were profusely given to training and furnishing their minds. Nor were the poor forgotten; they were invited to join in his family worship on the Sunday evening, and sought out often in their cottages for instruction and relief.

This was his life when at Highwood, and it was still varied by visits to his friends. Thus on the 24th of April, he set off "for a few days in London," having been "busy last night writing my letter to Mr. Williams, about a new chapel; left it as I passed by Hendon." When he first came to look at Highwood, he was "most struck by its distance from church—three miles;"[21] and it was only on hearing that "a new chapel was probable," that he entered on the purchase. Three years had now passed, and the hope of a chapel seemed further off than ever: he resolved therefore to avail himself of the new Church Building Acts, and erect one on Highwood Hill if he could obtain the sanction of the Commissioners. One great object of his present stay in London was to obtain this consent, and on his road he left with the vicar of the parish a statement of his wishes.

On the 25th he was Mr. Stephen's guest, and "called on the Bishop of London, who most kindly saw me, and gave me all the encouragement I could possibly expect. Afterwards called on Acland, and

[21] Diary, March, 1825.

with him to the Athenæum, where met Irish North, W. Whitmore, and one or two more old parliamentary men who knew me in my working days.

"May 3rd. Freemasons' Hall, Anti-Slavery meeting—Duke, Brougham, Denman, Mackintosh, &c. I could not get on comfortably or remember my topics.

"6th. Church Missionary meeting, and the Report and motion falling in with my views, I pleased people. May it tend to augment the missionary spirit.

"13th. Naval and Military Bible Society, where compelled to take the chair—delightful meeting. Captain Parry's declaration, that no persons more disposed than those hardy, daring fellows, to receive the kingdom of God as a little child.

"14th. To Sir T. Lawrence's, to sit the first time for Inglis; had a very pleasant hour with him. Williams called this morning, and talked fully to us.

"30th. Wrote letters, and made calls—on Southey, who anticipates civil war; when the Roman Catholic priests see their religion really in danger, they will incite their flocks to insurrection. And when I concurred in the possibility of this and said the House of Commons would concede, as it had done in 1782, he replied—'The administration then weak, but now—the Duke of Wellington—stretching out his arm stiffly, and pulling up his sleeve. The Duke *is* a great man.'

"June 7th. To African Institution, and interview with the Duke of Wellington, Lord Bathurst, and Sir George Murray. The Duke received us very pleasingly, and distinctly declared he charged himself with the obligations incurred by Canning and the late

government of which he a part." The same day he set off on his road to Sussex, to be present at the marriage of his third son. "9th. At Richmond saw Gerard Noel's library—a rich store of old divinity. 10th. Lavington—all my descendants met around the board—*mine*, of whom above forty years ago, when a bachelor in 1788, Dr. Warren declared that I had not stamina to last three weeks. Praise the Lord, O my soul. 11th. Simeon read the marriage service admirably. The day fine, and I walked, partly the 'experiment solitary,' and partly with Simeon and Sargent; whom I think the most truly humble and spiritual man I ever knew."

After spending a few days at Dale Park with his cousin Mr. Smith,—("he is all kindness—most amiable and endearing. I had much serious talk with him,") he was again fixed at Highwood on the 21st, and soon busy in the preparations for his chapel. "27th. To town immediately after breakfast to talk with Bishop of London about my chapel. He gives me reason to hope that the Commissioners will act according to their present powers, instead of proposing to wait till next year, when their new Bill may be passed. July 1st. Williams called, and was very civil —walked with me, and told me he must in conscience support me if he could not effect the matter himself. 8th. My intended visit to Scotland having been mentioned to Chalmers, &c. quite a fermentation produced. But I dare not leave my chapel business unfinished. Writing letter to Chalmers and hearing Sumner's apostolic preaching, my chief occupations.

12th. To Mr. Williams's to talk to him about my chapel, believing him a man of kind feelings, and generous. We had much talk—at length he told me that he would not oppose me. 24th. Lady Raffles walked with me, and we settled the site of the chapel."

Up to this time it was his intention to build the chapel upon Highwood Hill, amongst his own cottages, and near his house; but at this moment he discovered that there had been a secret opposition raised against his plan, grounded on the site he had proposed. Though Highwood Hill would better suit his own convenience, the chief population of the hamlet lay about Mill Hill, half a mile further from his house; and to this spot he reluctantly consented to move the site of the intended chapel. This led on the 18th of August to "a free conference with Mr. Williams"—Mill Hill being the place where he had so long talked of building, in which "he pressed his prior claim to build, and not unfairly. The conclusion was that he would build the chapel himself." This it appeared to the Commissioners that he could not effect; and when they met upon the 26th, after he had been with them for about an hour, they called in Mr. Wilberforce. They "kept me but a few minutes, and then read me their resolutions accepting my offer."[22]

The Commissioners at a following meeting (Sept. 16th) "assented to the site, and the Bishop of London asked me about making it a district church."

[22] Diary, Aug. 26.

The building was soon afterwards commenced. "It will doubtless," he told Hannah More,[23] "be an expensive matter, but when I consider that I am living here in the enjoyment of all the comforts of civilized society, and with the humble hope of a still better portion in a better world, I could not lay my head on my pillow with a quiet conscience, if I were not to have done my best to secure for all my poor neighbours the blessings of Christian instruction, and I hope of pastoral care."

But this good work begun in such a spirit was not to be completed without opposition and contention, in the midst of which he eminently manifested in private, as he had long done in public life, the meekness of true Christian wisdom under calumny and falsehood. It will perhaps be best to give at once the sequel of this matter, although it will somewhat interrupt the order of narration, as it lasted on until the conclusion of his life.

The secret opposition which had failed in preventing his design, now broke out into open violence; and when, in compliance with the advice of the Bishop of London as well as from his own wish, he applied to the Commissioners to give a district to his chapel, he received "a very rough and malignant letter from Williams, substantially charging me with falsehood and mercenary motives. The Bishop of London behaving very kindly.[24]

"24th. Sunday. Williams had written to me that he meant to summon publicly a vestry to consider

[23] Jan. 16. [24] Diary, May 20.

my proposal to the Commissioners for a district. I am told he preached against me. Poor fellow! I think I can truly say that I regret it chiefly on his own account. Yet I would not deceive myself. My insensibility may arise chiefly from habit—during forty-five years used to false charges, &c. it would be strange if I now regarded them. Blessed be God, I am sure I have meant well; and the only fear I have had is lest I should have spent too much, though in so good a cause. Expounded this evening on second lesson, 1 Cor. vii. 'The time is short.' 'It remaineth,' &c. 'The fashion of this world passeth away.'

"27th. The Commissioners doubt their power to add a district without the incumbent's permission. Vestry at Hendon—Williams very rude.

"June 2nd. At work on an Address to the parish of Hendon on Williams's attack about applying for a district. 5th. Published my Address."

His spirit at this trying moment may be gathered from a letter written the same day to his third son.

"Highwood Hill, June 5, 1829.

"My very dear ——,

Whence it has happened I can scarcely say, but it is really true, that I appear to myself to have had no leisure for some time past, indeed almost ever since you left us. The enclosed printed paper will explain how I have been occupied for the last few days. I need not assure you that I have been very unwillingly forced forward, but Mr. Williams's industry in diffusing his statements, compelled me

either to suffer his representations to receive that consent which my silence would be supposed to give them, (according to the old adage,) or to lay before the public a more correct narrative. Happily the Bishop of London is completely with us, and he is in consequence duly impressed with a sense of the unworthy conduct (his own phrase) of Mr. Williams. I have been afraid of not duly bearing in mind the apostle's injunction, not to render evil for evil or railing for railing, but I trust I have attacked Mr. Williams's character no more than was necessary for defending my own. The chief subject of my regret, and indeed deep concern, is, that I fear there will be a sort of permanent family feud with Williams: yet let but the affair be brought to any settlement either way, I will use my utmost endeavours to make up the quarrel; and it is a consideration on which my mind reposes with great and settled comfort, that long after I am dead and gone, some good man or other will be endeavouring to bring perishing souls to the great Physician. Again, the effects of the attention which I hope any occupant of the intended chapel will pay to the education of the children of the neighbourhood weighs powerfully with me. I believe I must have told you that the grand consideration which decided me to build was, that probably no one would arise, were I to suffer the opportunity to pass unimproved, who would have influence enough to carry the measure, though he might overflow with money. Also I conceive more people will be inclined to aid me in a pecuniary way, than would assist any other

builder; and therefore in fact it would cost me much less than it would cost any one else, and therefore the duty appeared naturally to devolve upon me. I had really rather it should not be mentioned, but I was once a little staggered, chiefly I think by the fear of the irritation, and the constant hostility that would follow.

"My spirits have I think been less buoyant than is common with me; at this very moment I feel languid and could be asleep in three minutes. Yet few persons of a bodily frame like mine, I mean not of the robust sort, enjoy such comfortable health as I do. We had a very pleasant party yesterday. Acland and his sweet wife in the afternoon from the Harrow speeches, and Mr. Dunn. I believe you know him, and if not, I could not give a just notion of him without going into more detail than I have now time for. There is an elegance and a refinement both of morals and manners that is rarely met with, and I might have added of taste and feeling too. In short he is a charming creature. Then Mrs. Latouche, the widow of the old gentleman of that name, who lived at Bellevue near Dublin, and her niece Miss Boyle, commonly termed Kate, and Sir Harry Verney, and Lady Raffles: all but Dunn slept here, and indeed are only just now separated.

"But I must stop. How goes on your old reclaimed Baptist? Do you know Acland's son at Christ-church? Ask him over to see you. It is an excellent family with which to cultivate an acquaintance. Young men scarcely ever estimate at a suffi-

ciently high rate the advantage of bringing together like-minded persons. May God bless you, my dearest ——; most sincerely and seriously do I say it. I am writing with a vile pen, that has the great fault of opening its mouth, and yet saying nothing. I am

Ever most affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"June 13th. The Commissioners are taking opinions as to their powers in relation to my chapel. There is something very fine in this supremacy of law; that these powerful men have no idea beyond ascertaining and obeying it."[25]

This uncertainty delayed the progress of the chapel, and in the following spring, the cause of contention still subsisting—"(Feb. 18th) to-day Mr. Williams issued a pamphlet against me. I resolved not to see it till to-morrow. Heard a little of it before dinner. But it would only fill my mind, when I had better not think of it. Evening, heard debates, &c.

"19th. M. read me Williams's pamphlet, a very artful manufacture, produced by availing himself of changing circumstances, and plans proportionably varying. God, Thou knowest my integrity. Morning, hearing debates—evening, Lardner's Address to London University—lectures containing wonders of astronomy.

"20th. Hearing Williams's pamphlet. I was just about setting to work to draw up a brief and general

[25] Diary.

defence, when Batten, Dr. Longley, &c. called. Evening, hearing M'Crie's Life of Knox. Had two days ago a very pleasing letter from the Bishop of London.

"21st. Sunday, very cold and strong wind, so at home read some of the Church service—evening, I expounded on Gal. iv. 6, second lesson; an exquisitely pregnant text. Blessed be God, not harassed by Williams's business all day, but enabled to keep my mind filled with better things than those of this world, and felt good-will towards poor Williams himself. I well remember what Fenelon says, that we should remember that the grace of God may change the heart of him whom you may conceive most opposed to Him.

"22nd. I cannot but record it as one of those gracious interventions of Providence, for which I have such cause of thankfulness, that the very man whom I most wished to consult, ——, came while we were at breakfast; led no doubt by that kindness which has always prompted him to be useful to me; and with pleasure I connect this kindness with the affectionate respect with which he always speaks and feels of my dear sister. God bless her. Oh He has blessed her by taking her to Himself. We talked on the proper course for me to pursue. He thinks I had better send in a paper to the Commissioners, who are in some sort partners to my business, and there record as it were my innocence. Lord, thou knowest I am innocent of all the charges he brings against me."

Two days later he wrote to Lady Olivia Sparrow.

"Highwood Hill, Middlesex, Feb. 24, 1830.

"My dear Lady O.

Many thanks for your friendly letter. It had appeared to me, I assure you, very long since we had seen or heard from each other; indeed I was not at all clear in what part of the world you had fixed your quarters. I rejoice that you have been able to stand the rigours of our Nova Zembla winter. But I have heard of many who after enduring the bitter cold without apparent injury, became more or less disordered when the weather became milder. Let me therefore claim the right of age to warn you against conceiving you may now dismiss all caution, and expose yourself to the weather with unrestrained freedom. I have great reason to be thankful for the measure of comfortable health that I enjoy. Indeed I often think no one scarcely has so much cause as myself to adopt the language of the psalmist, and to say, that goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life. I have none of those constitutional diseases which often imbitter the last stage of life.

"But I should never have done were I to attempt enumerating all the mercies and blessings which crowd on my view; and the spiritual are above all in value. Just now I have a cross. You know that I am building a chapel under the Commissioners, who have been intrusted with a power, in such cases as they approve, to grant to individuals the perpetual patronage of chapels which they will build and endow. My neigh-

bourhood is, and still more was, in the most wretched state as to spirituals; and the vicar, who cannot attend to the poor himself, ought to thank me for insuring their receiving religious instruction. Yet, though he will be a pecuniary gainer rather than loser, he is opposing me to the utmost, and is charging me, in a pamphlet circulated with great activity, with prosecuting by the grossest falsehoods a scheme for my own and my family's pecuniary gain, under the pretended motive of promoting the spiritual interests of my poor neighbours. I call God to witness I am perfectly innocent. But our vicar * * * * has wove a web of fallacies which it might have been difficult to unravel, in the judgment of those who had no previous disposition to think well of me. But it has been said men who are loose as to facts (the idea is commonly expressed more briefly) should have good memories; and from a little failure in recollection in one or two particulars he has greatly aided his own detection. But I will say no more, only I thought you as a friend of mine should be prepared for any rumours you might hear of my being discovered at seventy and upwards to be a liar, a covetous rogue, and a hypocrite.

"I am waiting with no little anxiety for the ascertainment of the fact as to the widow-burning enormity being abolished by Lord William. Oh may he have the honour of wiping off that foul blot. My dear friend, may all good attend you and yours; for the latter I do not forget. Have you seen Raikes's Ser-

mons? There are but few of them, but I think them very good. The Psalms, and St. Paul's Epistles, are more and more dear to me. Farewell.

Ever sincerely and affectionately

Your Ladyship's,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"The 43rd Psalm is just now my delight, and the 71st."

"27th. Found some useful letters about Williams's pamphlet. Well, blessed be God, all is sound; and at the day of judgment, if not before, my perfect guiltlessness of all the crimes imputed to me by that man, will be discovered; Psal. xliii.'

"March 2nd. Bishops of Winchester and Chester advise my dismissing Williams's charges from my mind, and my friends generally dissuade me from replying. Found a Journal which likely to be useful. Obliging note from the Bishop of London contradicting two of Williams's statements.

"March 10th. A most kind letter yesterday from the Bishop of Chester, informed me that at a great meeting of the Commissioners, Williams's attack upon me became the subject of discussion, and that no friend of mine could have wished more than was said about the character of both of us; and all in one story. A solitary walk with the psalmist—evening quiet.

"13th. I have been looking over old Journals, and preparing an answer to Williams's pamphlet; though

not meaning to publish. It is very shocking to think how artfully that man has been weaving a web . . . . . ; but, N. B. I must look carefully and impartially to see how far self-deception and loose recollection may have carried him to believe [what] he has published. It will be a curious and, as a study of human nature, useful investigation; but the insinuations and sarcasms most opposite to love, are, alas! clearly of an anti-divine origin."

The doubts which hung over the exact powers of the Commissioners still delayed the day of consecration, and it was not until a few days after the death of Mr. Wilberforce that St. Paul's chapel at Mill Hill was opened for the worship of Almighty God.[26]

Whilst this annoying business was in progress, his faith in God was proved by another trial. Though his style of living had always been below his income, he had never accumulated money. He had retrenched his expenses, to give and not to save; and he had given largely and constantly. "You probably know," was an incidental testimony to his unseen charity, from a distant relation soon after his decease, "that

[26] The deeds were at length prepared when his health was so feeble that he could not inspect them; and an error in the office of his professional adviser has since involved his representatives in tedious litigation. The Church Building Act required that a sum of 5 per cent. on the original cost should be invested as a repairing fund. . . Mr. Wilberforce paid into his banker's hands £200 for the purpose; but his solicitor striking out of his calculation some ornamental additions to the chapel, invested without his knowledge only £180; from this apparent flaw, corrected by a new deed of endowment, Mr. Williams raised a claim to the right of patronage in Mr. Wilberforce's chapel. The incumbent named by him continues to officiate, but the question is still pending in the courts of law.

it was very much owing to him that I was enabled during a very long period of years to live in an independent manner; and his tenderness and feeling in conferring obligations was such that they raised, not mortified, the objects of them. Whenever I alluded to the subject his usual reply was to this effect, 'Had our circumstances been changed, you would have acted towards me as I have done towards you.' To two others of my family his liberality laid the foundation of present usefulness, and I trust of future blessedness."

He had always therefore lived up to his income.

> "He feared not once himself to be in need,
> Nor cared to hoard for those whom he did breed:
> The grace of God he laid up still in store,
> Which like a stock he left unto his seed."

"I never intended to do more," he told his eldest son, "than not exceed my income, Providence having placed me in a situation, in which my charities of various kinds were necessarily large. But believe me there is a special blessing on being liberal to the poor, and on the family of those who have been so; and I doubt not my children will fare better even in this world, for real happiness, than if I had been saving £20,000 or £30,000 of what has been given away."

He had felt therefore some inconvenience from "reducing his rents, which were never high, full 37 per cent.," at a time when his family were most expensive to him. His property had been further lessened by his raising a considerable capital in order

to embark his eldest son, whose health appeared unequal to the practice of the law, in a large farming speculation, "to be actually managed" as he thought "by ——,"[27] a man in whose principles and practical acquaintance with the business, he at that time entertained the highest confidence. The event did not confirm his expectations; and in the very month when Mr. Williams's pamphlet appeared, he found that to secure the remainder of his fortune he must submit to the immediate and very heavy loss of nearly all the capital which had been invested in the business, and retrench greatly on his usual style of living. Yet he was still as free from care as ever, and his "solitary walk with the psalmist," was two days after the full discovery of his loss. Amongst many gratifying instances of his unbroken cheerfulness, an interesting sample may be found in his renewed intercourse with Sir James Mackintosh, whom he now met frequently at Battersea Rise. "Mackintosh came in," he says, "and sat most kindly chatting with me during my dinner—what a paragon of a companion he is; quite unequalled!"[28] "We are spending a little time at this to me deeply interesting place. I always visit the funeral urn—H. T. Jan. 16th, 1815—M. T. Oct. 12th, 1815. Sir James Mackintosh and his family now live in one of the houses which are built upon the ground which Henry (Thornton) sold on the side opposite to that of C. Grant's house. He has been sitting chattering to the girls and myself for above an hour; and this ex-

[27] Diary, May 20, 1825. [28] Ib. Nov. 25, 1829.

traordinary man spends, they tell me, much of his time in the circulating library room, at the end of the Common, and chats with the utmost freedom to all the passengers in the Clapham stage as he goes and comes from London. It is really to be regretted that he should thus throw away time so valuable. But he is at every body's service, and his conversation is always rich and sparkling..... I am much pleased with a review of Tom Macaulay's in the Edinburgh; it is not merely the very superior talent which it indicates, but its being on the right side. The Westminster Review, of which Mill is a principal support, is a very mischievous publication; and this Review will be a death-blow to Mill as a reasoner."[29]

Mackintosh's own account of this intercourse is peculiarly happy. "Do you remember Madame de Maintenon's exclamation, 'Oh the misery of having to amuse an old King, qui n'est pas amusable!' Now if I were called upon to describe Wilberforce in one word, I should say he was the most 'amusable' man I ever met with in my life. Instead of having to think what subjects will interest him, it is perfectly impossible to hit on one that does not. I never saw any one who touched life at so many points; and this is the more remarkable in a man who is supposed to live absorbed in the contemplation of a future state. When he was in the House of Commons, he seemed to have the freshest mind of any man there. There was all the charm of youth about him. And he is

[29] Letter to Mr. Babington.

quite as remarkable in this bright evening of his days as when I saw him in his glory many years ago."

The chief alteration wrought in him by age, was a shrinking from actual business. "I get little done," he complains, "compared with what I used to be able to do when a young man."[30] In spite of appearances which might mislead a careless eye, he had been a remarkably efficient man. "His mind," says a deeper observer,[31] "was of a highly discursive character; and it was often extremely amusing to observe how, while pursuing any particular subject, he was caught by some bright idea which flashed across his path, and carried him off (for a time at least) in a wholly different direction. This peculiarity belonged to his genius, and was a means of multiplying the instruction which his conversation afforded. But the volubility of his intellect was balanced by the stability and faithfulness of his moral qualities. When the happiness of man and the glory of God were in his view, he was for ever recurring to his point, and in spite of all his episodes of thought, was an assiduous, persuasive, and undaunted labourer."[32]

And such he still continued, when any great cause woke up his former fires. "Retired as he was from public life," says Mr. Gurney, "and greatly enfeebled in his health, he no longer found his place in the van of the army, or in the heat of the battle; but both by speaking and writing he repeatedly bore his public

[30] Diary, Oct. 28, 1829. [31] Joseph John Gurney.
[32] Mr. Gurney's Mem.

testimony in favour of the great principles of the Abolitionists; and his warm encouragements and wise counsels were always ready to stimulate and direct the efforts of his friends."[33]

The spring of 1830 supplies an instance. In the midst of all the trials and perplexities which then had gathered round him, the darkened prospects of the negro cause called him again from his retirement. "We must," he was convinced, "endeavour to produce throughout the whole country a just sense of our crime in maintaining such a cruel system." He consented therefore on the 15th of May, with a weakened voice and an enfeebled frame, to take the chair at a great meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society. "All the old friends of the cause gathered round"[34] him; and Freemasons' Hall overflowed with an unusual audience.

This was the last time he took any public part in London for this cause. In the following year he thus declined attending the anniversary of the Anti-Slavery Society.

"April 21, 1831.

"My dear Friend,

It cannot be necessary for me to assure you that my not obeying the summons issued to the friends of our great cause, to assemble in Exeter Hall, must be produced by some unavoidable hinderance. The prohibition of my medical adviser is clear and strong. I must beg you to do me the favour to assure our friends of my best wishes and fervent prayers for the

[33] Mr. Gurney's Mem. [34] Diary.

success of our endeavours. Our motto must continue to be, 'perseverance:' and ultimately I trust the Almighty will crown our efforts with success. I remain, my dear friend, with the highest respect and regard,

Ever yours sincerely and affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"T. Fowell Buxton Esq. &c. &c. &c."

The fruit of this effort was reaped in the elections which succeeded, when Yorkshire, which had ever led the way in this great cause, chose four representatives pledged to Emancipation, and amongst them Henry Brougham—though unconnected with the county—because he was its advocate. "The election," Mr. Wilberforce heard from him,[35] "turned very much on Slavery; your name was in every mouth, and your health the most enthusiastically received." "Depend upon it," was the encouraging augury with which he cheered some desponding friends, "we are getting forward. The standard of public opinion is rising under the influence of an improving body of clergy, and the secrets of the prison-house will be divulged more freely."

In France too the prospect was more cheering; and he at once re-opened an active correspondence with La Fayette, the Duc de Broglie, and others, whom the new revolution had raised to political importance.

But the sketch of this vigorous and cheerful mind

[35] H. Brougham Esq. to W. Wilberforce Esq.

would be exceedingly imperfect, if no hint were given of the hidden springs by which its freshness was maintained. A merely cheerful age is a melancholy sight to thoughtful men. "It quite lowers my spirits," was his own declaration at the conclusion of a visit,[36] "to see people past seventy, so little apparently estranging themselves from worldly objects; it is most painful to me not to be able to converse with them on religion." His own cheerfulness rested on a surer basis. He was often thoughtfully retracing all "the way by which the Lord his God had led him." "How striking is the change of fifty years—then Samuel Smith and I travelled as bachelors, and now he has a house full of descendants; and I also have five children and a grandchild living, besides a daughter and sweet little grandson gone, I humbly trust, to a better world. Praise the Lord, O my soul. My dear, and I trust imparadised, child's birthday."[37]

This same tone of thought may be traced in his letters to those with whom he was most intimate. "It is one of my frequent subjects of gratitude and praise, though not as frequently as it ought to be, that in the kind providence of God I was born an Englishman. Go through the whole earth and enumerate every part of it, and you will find nothing like our own country. An Englishman too in this period of our country's existence, and in the middle station of life, &c. &c. &c. We do not, I am sure *I* do not,

[36] Letter to the Rev. R. I. Wilberforce.
[37] Diary, July 29, 1829, at Wood Hall.

live sufficiently under the constant influence of this spirit of thankfulness; and I believe there is not any one, who has at all observed the dealings of Providence in his own instance with any thing like a due measure of attention, who will not have seen many, many particulars in which he has been deeply indebted to the preventing or directing grace of God. It was the reproach, and among the chief causes of the the condemnation of the pagan world, scanty as was the light they enjoyed compared with the brightness of our meridian day, that they 'were not thankful.' And still more the people of God were threatened with being cast off if they should not serve the Lord their God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things. How much more then should our hearts overflow with continual gratitude! I doubt not the want of this blessed disposition will constitute one of the leading articles in the condemnation of the unholy; and I have found rustics, as unassailable as a tortoise in every other quarter, feeling their weak and indefensible state in this point, when I have put it to themselves whether they have been in any due degree grateful to the God who gave them all their present blessings, and who gave His only Son to die for them, and to the Saviour, who for their sakes endured the unknown agonies of His bitter passion and cruel death."

In his letters to his children these feelings especially appear.

TO MISS WILBERFORCE.

"(Private.) Highwood Hill, July 15, 1830.

"My dear ——,

I was compelled to make up in extreme haste, and to finish full as rapidly, the letter to you which is just despatched to the post office, and I recollected, when it was too late to supply the defect, that there was not in my epistle a single word of a serious, or rather of a religious character. Now, though I do not carry my principle in this respect so far as some good people have done, thinking it wrong that any letter under any circumstances should be sent off without containing some religious sentiments, yet at my time of life, almost a year beyond that stated by the psalmist to be the ordinary limit of the life of man, and more especially when a daughter is addressed, I do think there should be some recognition of those influential principles which ought ever to be uppermost in a Christian's bosom. And if from any one the constant exhibition of religious principles and feelings might be expected, assuredly from me, in whose heart there may well be expected a continual breathing forth of adoring gratitude to my God and Saviour, for all the long course of goodness and mercy by which my life has been distinguished. I have often thought that if I had been imbued with the notions described in Mrs. Grant's letters from the Highlands, (notions which represent the Deity as being jealous of the happiness of his creatures,) I

should certainly have supposed that I must prepare for some signal misfortune, to counterbalance all the accumulated blessings which had been poured out on me in such rich and increasing profusion. But oh how much more generous, as well as just, are the views of the character of the Supreme Being, our heavenly Father, which we derive from the word of God! 'God is love!' Even under a dispensation which, when compared with that of the gospel, may be deemed to wear somewhat of a harsh and repulsive countenance, the Jews were told that the laws prescribed to them were devised for their good; but under our more generous and gracious system, judgment and punishment are termed the strange work of God; and mercy, and long-suffering, and bounty, and loving-kindness, are his habitual dispositions towards us. Even when speaking to sinners (there is scarcely any passage in the whole Bible which has afforded me so much comfort) the language is, 'The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him, *in them that hope in His mercy.*' Only consider the force of that assurance, and the comfort it must give to any who may be apprehensive of being presumptuous in indulging hopes of pardon. They are assured not that they may presume to hope that their sins may be forgiven, but that by so hoping they will display the very disposition of mind in which God takes pleasure. Believe me to be,

Ever your very affectionate Father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

With this grateful retrospect of life he combined a high value of the time which still remained to him. "What importance does it give to life when it is regarded in its true character, as the probation in which are to become constitutional the dispositions which must form our meetness for the heavenly state! When the real purpose and grand end of life is compared with that low view of it which is taken by the votaries of ambition, or even of literature and science, the contrast between the joys of children, and the researches and pursuits of manhood, is a most feeble and inadequate illustration."[38] "The main fault of the present day," he now repeatedly declared, "is the making knowledge and intellectual advancement the great object of pursuit, instead of that moral improvement by which we may be fitted for a higher and better state. Much mystery overhangs the one, and time with an oblivious touch effaces the little we do attain of science; but blessed is he who attains some lineaments of the moral image of God, for they shall see Him as He is, and then shall know even as they now are known."[39] This conviction made him still watchful to redeem the time. "This evening," he says, Feb. 15th, "I expounded on the Epistle, 'So run that ye may obtain, &c. lest I should be a cast-away.' The second lesson this very evening is 1 Cor. ii., in which St. Paul relates his labour and sufferings. And could pains be required by HIM? O then, my soul, strive—to him that overcometh only, the

[38] Letter to Lord Teignmouth.
[39] Letter to Mr. Babington.

promise is assured."[40] "My future state should now be my grand, indeed comparatively speaking, my sole concern. God's kind providence has granted to me a residue of life after its business is over. I know I must be near death, perhaps very near it. I believe that on the state in which death finds me, will depend my eternal condition; and even though my state may now be such as to produce a humble hope that I am safe, yet by a wise improvement of my time, I may augment my eternal happiness, besides enjoying delightful communion with God in the interval. Let me then make the improvement of my soul the first grand business of my life, attending also to the good of others, if possible both by my pen, and conversation, and social intercourse."

In this spirit he continued still his rules of abstinence and self-denial, saying on Ash Wednesday, "We attend too little to these days;" and often secretly observing his fasting regulations—"disused pleasant food—Daniel. Entire fasting does not suit my constitution, but I attend to the principle."[41] Often also did he now give up his days to more continuous devotion, employing thus especially his own and his children's birth-days, and noting in his Diary. "I had an interview of two hours and a quarter before dinner of unspeakable value. Why not secure many similar seasons? At my time of life what so proper or so likely to make me useful to others as thus walking with God?"[42] It was not in vain that he thus watched and laboured. Through his later years he walked, in

[40] Diary, 1829. [41] Aug. 22, 1830. [42] Aug. 24, 1830.

an eminent degree, with God, and was literally kept in perfect peace through every trial. Those who lived with him and marked his unmixed cheerfulness could scarcely believe that he felt as much on relinquishing in 1831 his house at Highwood, as a letter written at the time implies.

"Highwood, March 16.

"My dear ——,

I wished that you should receive from myself rather than from the tongue of rumour, tidings which sooner or later were sure to be conveyed to you, and which I know would give you pain. The loss incurred has been so heavy as to compel me to descend from my present level, and greatly to diminish my establishment. But I am bound to recognise in this dispensation the gracious mitigation of the severity of the stroke. It was not suffered to take place till all my children were educated, and nearly all of them placed out in one way or another; and by the delay, Mrs. Wilberforce and I are supplied with a delightful asylum under the roofs of two of our own children. And what better could we desire? A kind Providence has enabled me with truth to adopt the declaration of David, that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days. And now, when the cup presented to me has some bitter ingredients, yet surely no draught can be deemed distasteful which comes from such a hand, and contains such grateful infusions as those of social intercourse and the sweet endearments of filial gratitude and affection. What

I shall most miss will be my books and my garden, though I own I do feel a little the not (for I know not how long if ever) being able to ask my friends to take a dinner or a bed with me, under my own roof. And as even the great apostle did not think the 'having no certain dwelling-place,' associated with his other far greater sufferings, unworthy of mention, so I may feel this also to be some, though I grant not a great evil, to one who has so many kind friends who will be happy to receive him."

His sure confidence was still in God. "He will not suffer me to be disgraced in my old age. What gives me repose in all things, is the thought of their being His appointment. I doubt not that the same God who has in mercy ordered so many events for so long a course of time, will never fail to overrule all things both for my family and myself." And on recovering from a temporary illness, "I can scarce understand," he said, "why my life is spared so long, except it be to show that a man can be as happy without a fortune as with one."

It should be mentioned to the credit of our times, that by no less than six persons, one of them a West Indian, such private offers were now made to Mr. Wilberforce as would have at once restored his fortune.[43] It was from no false pride that he declined entirely these friendly propositions, thinking it be-

[43] One of these offers, made, highly to his honour, by the late Lord Fitzwilliam, never reached Mr. Wilberforce's ears; a near connexion, through whom it was made, and who knew his former decision, declining it without consulting him.

came his Christian character rather to adapt his habits to his present income. Towards his chapel at Mill Hill alone he consented to receive the assistance of his friends; and no less happy in receiving than in showing kindness, he carried always in his pocket and delighted to produce a well-worn list of their several contributions.

His leaving Highwood was soon followed by a trial of a different nature, the death of his surviving daughter. "Blessed be God," he says, during her illness, "we have every reason to be thankful for the state of mind we witness in her: a holy, calm, humble reliance on her Saviour, enables her to enter the dark valley with Christian hope, leaning as it were on her Redeemer's arm, and supported and cheered by the blessed promises of His gospel. We are in the hands of our heavenly Father, and I am sure no one has hitherto had such reason as myself to say that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days.

"I was much impressed yesterday with the similarity in some respects of my own situation, to that of her dear little innocent, who was undergoing the operation of vaccination. The infant gave up its little arm to the operator without suspicion or fear. But when it felt the puncture, which must have been sharp, no words can express the astonishment and grief that followed. I could not have thought the mouth could have been distended so widely as it continued, till the nurse's soothing restored her usual calmness (for it is really true, that I never knew an infant that cried near so seldom as this little one).

What an illustration is this, thought I, of the impatient feelings we are often apt to experience, and sometimes even to express, when suffering from the dispensations of a Being, whose wisdom we profess to believe to be unerring, whose kindness we know to be unfailing, whose truth also is sure, and who has declared to us, that all things shall work together for good to them that love Him, and that the object of His inflictions is to make us partakers of His holiness! Let us have your prayers, that the painful visitation we are now experiencing, may have a blessed effect upon us."

Now was seen the fruit of the high degree in which he had learned to "walk by faith rather than by sight." "I have often heard," he says, "that sailors on a voyage will drink 'friends astern' till they are half way over, then 'friends a-head.' With me it has been 'friends a-head' this long time." It was not by the slow process of reasoning, that he learned to regard this as a short separation, he at once felt that they should not long be parted. And he soon describes himself, "as enjoying as much peace and social comfort, as any ought to expect in this stormy world."[44]

"I forget whether I sent you any particulars of the closing scene," he writes to Mr. Babington. "They were such as to call forth from our dear friend Sargent declarations of satisfaction and thankfulness, which will be sources of comfort and joy to Mrs. Wilberforce and myself as long as we live. The Monday after she was taken away we removed to St. Boniface,

[44] To J. Stephen Esq. March 30.

which we had taken in the hope of its conducing to her recovery. It is certainly one of the most delightful of all possible retirements. The most romantic scenery, sheltered from every cold wind, and abounding in the most delightful walks, both sea and inland. There the Sargents; my S. and his wife, and little toddler and prattler; my H. and ourselves, passed a delightful fortnight. Really it was an oasis in the wilderness."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

APRIL 1832 TO AUGUST 1833.

Retirement into Kent and the Isle of Wight—His great happiness there—Habits of life—Specimen of conversation—Retrospect of life—Thankfulness—Humility—Tenderness—Trust in God—Mr. Richmond's portrait—Anti-Slavery exertions—Last illness—Death—Funeral.

WHEN Mr. Wilberforce left Highwood Hill, he intended to divide the year between the houses of his second and third sons. The latter already had a home fit for his reception in the Isle of Wight; and the former soon possessed one in the neighbourhood of Maidstone. "You will join me I am sure," he tells more than one amongst his friends,[1] "in being thankful as well as rejoiced in my being able to inform you that Lord Brougham has given to my second son, (or rather I may say to me,) quite spontaneously and very handsomely, the living of East Farleigh. The parsonage is very little above a mile distant from Barham Court, and there must be many pleasant circumstances in being so near the residence, library, park, &c. of an old friend, of such dimensions.

[1] April, 1832.

This event comes in such a way as strongly to confirm the persuasion that it is an indication of the favour of God; and I cannot but recognise a providential hand in Lord Brougham's being prompted to make the appointment just when we were in want of such a settlement and residence; though Lord Brougham knew nothing of the matter, and was quite unconsciously the instrument of granting us our wish."

Here and in the Isle of Wight, to the great joy of those he visited, his remaining years were spent. Personal reasons forbid the veil being lifted from his life as heretofore, and all the feelings shown with which his warm heart overflowed, now that he had become the parishioner and guest of his sons. But a few extracts from his Diary and letters will give the outline of his holy and peaceful age.

"We have now been here," he writes from one of his parsonage houses,[2] "for about six weeks. How can I but rejoice rather than lament at a pecuniary loss, which has produced such a result as that of bringing us to dwell under the roofs of our dear children, and witness their enjoyment of a large share of domestic comforts, and their conscientious discharge of the duties of the most important of all professions." "I thank God," he tells another friend,[3] "my health is in about its ordinary state; though I am becoming yearly more and more stiff and crazy. But what causes have I for gratitude! surely no one ought more habitually to feel and adopt the psalmist's language, Goodness and mercy have followed me all

[2] To James Stephen Esq. [3] Lady Olivia Sparrow.

my days. And now have not we great cause for thankfulness in being moored in our latter days in the peaceful haven which we enjoy, (after all my tossings during my long and stormy voyage in the sea of politics,) under the roofs of our sons in Kent and in the Isle of Wight, relieved from all the worry of family cares, and witnessing the respectability, usefulness, and domestic happiness of those most dear to us. Had not the state of my finances rendered it absolutely necessary however, I fear I should hardly have thought myself warranted in giving up my only residence, but it is really true, speaking unaffectedly, that our heavy loss has led to the solid and great increase of our enjoyments."

Some of his letters fill in other features of the picture. "It gives me no little pleasure,[4] and calls for a large return of gratitude to the Giver of all good, to witness the delightful scene that is here exhibited of pastoral service and domestic happiness. 18th. When at a late hour last night I was compelled to lay down my pen, I was entering on a topic so deeply interesting to me, that it might have carried me on writing till morning. But you are able from experience to judge how a parent must feel in witnessing the pastoral labours of his own child. This living is not of the pecuniary value which was supposed and even stated, when it was given, and —— is not eating the bread of idleness. His lady was not well endowed with pecuniary charms: but they will have enough, I trust, for comfort; and even if it were not a sin, as it certainly is, to marry for

[4] To Mr. Babington, Aug. 17.

money, I should deem it one of the basest actions a gentleman could commit. My wife must have told yours that this house is enlivened by a delightful infant which twaddles about most captivatingly, and begins to lisp out papa and mamma, with more than Cicero's eloquence. My health certainly exhibits symptoms of decay, but not I think in any great degree. I live however hoping, late in the day as it is, to make a progress in the divine life. O pray for me, my friend, that I may grow in grace."

"We are passing our time here very agreeably; indeed we might well use a much stronger term; for we should be void of all feeling if the warmest emotions of gratitude were not called forth in us, towards the gracious Ordainer of all things, for granting us, in the evening of life, after the tossings of the ocean of this world, such a quiet and comfortable haven. Here too we have the delightful spectacle of those whom we love most, enjoying a large measure of human life's sweetest enjoyments, combined with the diligent discharge of its most important duties. And then that lovely baby! What a manifest benevolence there is in the Almighty's having rendered young children so eminently attractive, considering the degree in which their very existence must depend on the disposition of those around them, to bear with their little infirmities, sustain their weakness, and supply their wants. How little could I expect to complete my seventy-second year! Yet it is on this day completed, and I am suffering no pain, and my complaints those which are salutary without producing great bodily

suffering, like the kind suggestions of a friend tenderly watching over me, and endeavouring to obtain for me the benefits, without my feeling the evils commonly attendant on providential visitations. Really the loss of fortune has been delayed till it brings with it some positive comforts, without producing inconvenience or vexation; my children's education having been completed, and my parliamentary life quite finished. The necessity too of quitting my own house has not taken place till I am supplied with a choice of residences; quite an embarras des richesses in the habitation line. O pray for me, my dear ——, that my return of gratitude and service may be more commensurate with the rich stock of blessings which the Almighty has poured out upon me."

His overflowing gratitude to God was the chief feature of his later years. Every thing became with him a cause for thanksgiving. When some of the infirmities of years began to press upon him, "what thanks do I owe to God," was his reflection, "that my declining strength appears likely not to be attended with painful diseases, but rather to lessen gradually and by moderate degrees! How good a friend God is to me! When I have any complaint it is always so mitigated and softened as to give me scarcely any pain. Praise the Lord, O my soul. I have had a feverish night, or rather a dreamy and disturbed one, but no head-ache or pain, D. G. What thanks do I owe to my gracious and kind heavenly Father!"[6] And so when one of his friends had passed

[6] Diary.

through a painful operation, "seldom," he says, "have I felt any thing so deeply. My hard heart quite confounded and overpowered. But I go to prayer. How thankful should I be to be spared such trials, my strength not being equal to them! I humbly commit myself unto Him, who surely has given me reason to say, 'goodness and mercy have followed me all my days.'" And when he was himself threatened with a similar attack, "O let me commit myself," was his consolation, "to Him who has ever poured forth on me His mercies with so lavish a hand, ('God is love,') that how can I doubt He will strengthen me for any cross He may see fit to lay on me. But, O Lord, 'if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' Oh may I be able to add, from the heart, 'nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'"

The details of his life at his parsonage residences were much what they had been of late at Highwood, except that greater quietness gave him more time for reading, and for those habits of devotional retirement which manifestly grew with his increasing years; in which he found the Psalms and St. Paul's Epistles becoming more and more dear to him. He was still read to whilst he dressed; and after thus hearing Sharon Turner's Sacred History, he notes in his pocket-book the importance of "meditating more on God as the Creator and Governor of the universe. Eighty millions of fixed stars, each as large at least as our sun. Combine the considerations hence arising with the madness and guilt of sin as setting up our will against that of God. Combine with it

Christ's unspeakable mercy and love, and that of God in Christ."

This subject he had been accustomed to notice in his family exhortations. "The discoveries of astronomy," he said, "instead of having an opposite effect, warm my heart. I think of eighty millions of stars in our nebula, and of two thousand nebulæ, and I feel elevated and thankful to bear part in this magnificent creation, to be the child of Him who is the Governor of these boundless dominions." These thoughts often passed into meditations upon the moral attributes of God. "Retire into thy closet," is one of the last entries in his pocket-book, "and there let contemplation indulge her flights and expatiate." "I find unspeakable pleasure," he tells a friend, "in the declarations so often reiterated in the Word of God of the unvarying truth of the Supreme Being. To me there is something inexpressibly sublime in the assurance, that throughout the whole immeasurable extent of the all but infinite empire of God truth always extends, and like a master-key unlocks and opens all the mysterious wisdom, and goodness, and mercy of the Divine dispensations."

His early walk and his mid-day employments remained unaltered; and in the afternoon he still took, as heretofore, considerable exercise; pacing at East Farleigh, during the winter, up and down a "sheltered, sunny, gravel walk;" and in the summer, climbing with delight at Brighstone to the top of the chalk downs, or of an intermediate terrace, or walking long upon the unfrequented shore. "April 4th. Like the

finest summer day. The air singularly mild and balmy, and not a leaf stirring. S. engaged in at a cottage reading. R. drove me out in the pony-chaise; which very pleasant. Much affected this evening by my own reflections. Alas, I am an unprofitable servant, but God's mercy and Christ's love are inconceivably great; His ways (thank God) not as our ways. 5th. Day, if possible, even sweeter than yesterday; as balmy and more air. Walked with my sons up the hill. This evening began Archdeacon Robinson's Last Days of Bishop Heber—had begun Sir Walter Scott's last work, but I felt desirous of something more spiritual."

His evenings were as bright as ever, and though his power of retaining new impressions was greatly impaired, the colours of his earlier recollections seemed scarcely to fade. "How full he is of anecdote!" said a friend, when he had for a moment left the room, to one of the party who was writing at another table. "It would be quite worth while some evening to put down notes of his conversation." This suggestion was at once acted on when he returned, and some extracts from the notes taken down, as far as the pen could follow him, will give a faint idea of the richness of his usual conversation, though the life and play of mind which dressed up every sentence can never be transferred into the copy.

"One day while Hastings' trial was proceeding, an important point came on when only Burke and two or three more were present—little Michael Angelo

among them, very pompous. Ned Law, who was to argue the case as Hastings' counsel, began, 'It is a pity, sir, to raise a discussion on this matter. This is no doubtful question of political expedience, it is a mere point of law, and my honourable friend there,' pointing to little Michael, 'from his accurate knowledge of the law, which he has practised with so much success, can confirm fully what I say.' Michael puffed and swelled, and almost assented. Burke was quite furious, and ran to him and shook him, saying, 'You little rogue, what do you mean by assenting to this?' Michael is talked of for a peer. It is not unlikely; he has no son. He was left a good fortune by his father, who was a builder, and he got on by keeping a good cook and giving excellent dinners. I remember Sheridan playing off on him one of his amusing tricks. He did not know where to go for a dinner, so sitting down by Michael Angelo he said, 'There is a law question likely to rise presently on which from your legal knowledge you will be wanted to reply to Pitt, so I hope you will not think of leaving the House.' Michael sat still with no little pleasure, while Sheridan slipped out, walked over to Michael's house, and ordered up dinner, saying to the servants, 'Your master is not coming home this evening.' He made an excellent dinner, came back to the House, and seeing Michael looking expectant, went to release him, saying, 'I am sorry to have kept you, for after all I believe this matter will not now come on to-night.' Michael immediately walked

home, and heard to his no little consternation, when he rang for dinner, 'Mr. Sheridan had it, sir, about two hours ago.'

"Poor Boswell! I once had some serious conversation with him; he was evidently low and depressed, and appeared to have many serious feelings. He told me that Dr. Johnson had assured him he was never intimately acquainted with one religious clergyman. I was determined not to let him off; so I replied, 'that can only be because he never sought their acquaintance. They knew that he had about him such persons as they would not choose for companions.'

"General Smith, Sir Sydney's uncle, put his papers into my hands: amongst them a most extraordinary correspondence between Lord Elgin and Sir Sydney. Sir Sydney was most scandalously used. Others had ribands and peerages, but he never had any thing. At the time of the siege of Acre, he got from the old Pacha a ring, or some other emblem of authority, which gave him absolute command over all the gates; and one of his first employments of it was, to go to the Pacha's dungeons and set all the captives free. The Pacha grumbled in vain, exclaiming pathetically, 'But, Sir Sydney, they owe me moneys.....'

"Whitbread was a rough speaker; he spoke as if he had a pot of porter at his lips and all his words came through it. I remember his drawing tears from me upon the Lottery question. After Canning's speech on Lord Bexley's Resolution about a pound note and a shilling being of equal value with a guinea, he said to me, 'Well, I do envy him the power of making

that speech.' This was very curious to me, because I never could have guessed that it was at all the model to which he aspired. Poor Canning! I knew him well, and he knew that I knew him. He felt that I knew him before he became well acquainted with Pitt. He had a mind susceptible of the forms of great ideas; as for these men, they have not minds up to any thing of the sort; their minds would burst with the attempt. I have often talked openly with Canning, and I cannot but hope that some good may have come from it. When I was with him once, he was in bed, on a sort of sofa-bed, at Gloucester Lodge, and Southey was mentioned. 'I did not know that he was in town.' 'Yes, he is, and dines with me to-morrow; but I am afraid you will not come because it is Sunday.' Canning was not a first-rate speaker! Oh he was as different as possible from Pitt, and from old Fox too, though he was so rough; he had not that art, 'celare artem.' If effect is the criterion of good speaking, Canning was nothing to them, for he never drew you to him in spite of yourself. You never lost sight of Canning; even in that admirable speech of his about Sir John C. Hippisley, when your muscles were so exercised by laughing, it was the same thing; yet he was a more finished orator than Pitt. Oh how little justice was done to Pitt on Warren Hastings' business! People were asking, what could make Pitt support him on this point and on that, as if he was acting from political motives; whereas he was always weighing in every particular whether Hastings had exceeded the discretionary

power lodged in him. I well remember, I could swear to it now, Pitt listening most attentively to some facts which were coming out either in the first or second case. He beckoned me over, and went with me behind the chair, and said, 'Does not this look very ill to you?' 'Very bad indeed.' He then returned to his place and made his speech, giving up Hastings' case. He paid as much impartial attention to it as if he were a jury-man.

"One of the most remarkable things about Romilly was, that though he had such an immense quantity of business, he always seemed an idle man. If you had not known who and what he was, you would have said—'he is a remarkably gentleman-like, pleasant man; I suppose, poor fellow, he has no business'—for he would stand at the bar of the House, and chat with you, and talk over the last novel, with which he was as well acquainted as if he had nothing else to think about. Once indeed I remember coming to speak to him in court, and seeing him look fagged and with an immense pile of papers by him. This was at a time when Lord Eldon had been reproached for having left business undischarged, and had declared that he would get through all arrears by sitting on until the business was done. As I went up to Romilly, old Eldon saw me, and beckoned to me with as much cheerfulness and gaiety as possible. When I was alone with Romilly, and asked him how he was, he answered, 'I am worn to death; here have we been sitting on in the vacation, from nine in the morning until four; and when we leave this place, I have to

read through all my papers, to be ready for to-morrow morning; but the most extraordinary part of all is, that Eldon, who has not only mine, but all the other business to go through, is just as cheerful and untired as ever.'"

The conversation turned on other topics, and a sick person in the neighbourhood being named—"Poor soul," he said, "how little we know of the afflictions of those in other ranks of life! I am quite abashed to think of them. I have to find sorrows for myself; God has so crowded His mercies upon me. I can fancy how delightful it would be to pour in oil and wine into her wounds. How wonderful is the power with which all the general statements of Scripture come home to the different circumstances of life! In how many instances, for example, does that parable of the good Samaritan direct us how to be truly pitiful!" And soon after, speaking of Herschel's saying, "These are things which must be for ever hid from man," he broke out, "No, that they shall not; I shall know all these things. Oh how low at the best are your wise men and philosophers! Truly, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." He then began to speak of the astonishing truths of the gospel. "Only think of that one declaration, God is perfect truth and perfect love. Why that one thought worked out, is enough to fit a man for heaven. Oh the goodness of God to me, to bear all my provocations of Him for so many years, and then not only hear my prayers, but give me grace to offer them." Here he stopped quite overpowered by his feelings.

Few things were more striking than the calm, historical tone in which he spoke and thought of the great national events, in the stormy reality of which he had borne so prominent a part.

"I sometimes look back," he tells his old friend Mr. Bankes,[6] "on the long consultations you and I and Henry Thornton had, when we were wishing for peace early in this century. After we had once to do with Buonaparte in his full force, I do believe there was scarcely any alternative between destroying him or being destroyed ourselves. But there was an interval before the completion of the former war, when perhaps the ruinous amount of debt might have been prevented. But I have done with politics."

Low as was his estimate of all that he had actually done, it was easy to see, by the judgments which he formed of others, how much he now rejoiced in his earlier choice of objects and pursuits. "Much struck to-day," says his Diary, "with T. as the successful lawyer at his best. How little has he been (I fear) preparing for another world! His father was an artisan; what will it signify in a little time whether he had remained on that level or risen as he has?" "Thank God," was his common exclamation after parting with those who had drawn prizes in the lottery of worldly schemes; "Thank God that I was led into a different path." "How much rather," he said to one of his sons as he drove by the splendid house of one whom he had always thought rapacious— "how much rather would I be living as I am on the

[6] Oct. 19, 1832.

wreck of my fortune, than have fattened as he has done upon the public!"

Never did any one see in him the least touch of regret for that which he had given up. "When a man chooses the rewards of virtue," he said with some little indignation, after hearing such complaints, "he should remember, that to resign the pleasures of vice is part of his bargain."

But that which was of all things most worthy of remark in his review of his past life, was his unfeigned humility. He observed in many different directions, the improvement that had taken place since he first came upon the stage, but he never seemed aware of the degree in which he was himself its cause. "How well I remember," he says with delight after hearing a report of the flourishing religious state of British India, "Mr. Grant, Mr. Udny, and two others, writing to me in 1788," (the letter reached him as he went apparently a dying man to Bath,) "begging my good offices in a religious view; there being then scarcely any show of religion among our residents in India."[7] Notwithstanding the many clouds which he thought gathering over the political horizon, he noticed "with delight the improvement in the middle and rather higher ranks of society;"[8] and in "the despondency which various circumstances" caused, he was "always revived and comforted by contemplating the vast improvement in the character and conduct of our clergy;"[9] but that

[7] Vid. Memorial Sketches of the Rev. D. Brown.
[8] To Hannah More. [9] To T. F. Buxton Esq.

he had been a great instrument in this happy change never seemed to occur to him. To himself he appeared "a sadly unprofitable servant,"[10] and needed constantly "the soothing consideration that we serve a gracious Master, who will take the will for the deed. Thou *didst* well (even the phraseology is indicative) that it was in thy heart." Any direct allusion to his services was met by some natural disclaimer, "that we each knew our own faults," and that he was deeply conscious of "neglected opportunities of service;" just as a friendly preface to his work on Christianity drew from him the remark, "Such things ought never to be published till a man is dead."[11]

He had always detested flattery. Mr. Gisborne never saw in him so much display of temper as when, being addressed with servility by a person who wished for his favourable influence with Mr. Pitt, he threw the letter on the ground, with the exclamation, "How much rather would I have the man spit in my face!" This beautiful simplicity survived all the unfavourable influences of his life; and the old man whose name was a familiar word in every mouth, whose country parsonage was visited almost like a shrine, and who was told by Rammohun Roy, that when "he left the East, one of his chief wishes was to see Mr. Wilberforce," was still altogether lowly in his own sight, and could say with natural simplicity when treated in a place of public concourse with some marks of courtesy, "How very civil

[10] Diary, passim. The eloquent description of this feature of his character in the Nat. Hist. of Enthusiasm, 7th Ed. p. 172, is really not overdrawn.

[11] To T. Babington Esq. Feb. 13, 1827.

they were to me; they made way for me, and treated me as if I were some great man!"

The same causes had kept unimpaired his natural tenderness of heart. "I am not worthy," he writes at this time with all the freshness of his youth,[12] "of your tenderness; and yet, my dear friend, I must love you while the power of loving at all is left me." To the same friend he writes again in language which throws an affecting light on his unclouded gaiety of outward demeanour. "I have observed that older people join in the gaieties of the young *externally*, while all the time there is a secret chamber of the heart in which some domestic griefs are exerting their influence. For instance, this is the very week in which some years ago we were watching our dear ——'s gradual sinking into the grave, which took place almost at the last hour of it. My dear wife's wounds bleed afresh at this anniversary. It really is not so with me. I can look back on the event with a melancholy that is not unpleasing; the consciousness of our dear child's happiness infuses a tender kind of triumph. You can sympathize with me in all these feelings, and our two wives also will feel alike."

Almost the only growing mark of age was a still increasing love of that rest to which he was drawing nearer. "The grasshopper had become a burden to him," and he declined to settle a dispute which had been referred to him, with the excuse, "My spirits are now quite unequal to these unpleasant contentions."[13] With the same feeling he replied, when

[12] To T. Babington Esq. [13] Diary.

pressed to take a part in an election contest, "I have retired, and must be silent and neutral." When he looked out into the world from his retirement, it was in the faithful spirit of one who though not unacquainted with its storms, was more deeply learned in the secret of a quiet confidence in God. "I have felt my mind and spirits less affected than perhaps they ought to have been by the various clouds that are now gathering around us with such appalling blackness. Yet I trust that I may calmly, though humbly, resign myself to the gracious disposal of that great Being, who, I am sure, has mercifully poured out on me such unnumbered blessings, and so allayed with mitigating kindness the few trials to which I have been subjected, as to give me cause to look up to Him and address Him as my heavenly Father. For my own part, I quite rejoice in being out of all the bustle and turmoil of political life." [14]

Even in his full strength indeed it had been his lot and not his choice. "Though the contrary might be inferred," he tells a friend, "from the nature of the pursuits to which my time and talents were chiefly devoted, I never relished politics; on the contrary, they were quite distasteful to me. Just as the scene of my labours (the great city) was so little my residence by preference, that I well remember, (before my home was cheered and endeared to me by a wife and children,) I used to obey the call to exchange the various delights of a country life, for the contentious occupations of a parliamentary man, most unwillingly. I

[14] Letter to ——, 1832.

really could scarcely refrain from tears, as I approached the bustle and smoke of London. And now how refreshing is it, when our home prospects are so awfully gloomy, to contemplate the blessed effects with which a kind Providence is rewarding the labours of those who, instead of suffering themselves to be seduced by vanity or by self-interest into devoting to politics all their faculties and endeavours, are using their best efforts to promote the cause of God, and the true happiness of their fellow-creatures."

To these objects he was still alive; and to his prayer "that I may be a less unprofitable servant," he joined all the exertion still within his power. He now never met a friend of earlier days, whose principles were different from his own, (and such he took great pains to see,) without following up their intercourse with a long and friendly letter on their most important interests, pressing mainly on them, that it was not yet too late for them to make the better choice. "This is what they need," he repeated often; "they get to think that they are in for it, and that though they have chosen ill it is too late to alter. I well remember going to my old friend Lord —— in his last illness. I had spoken to him fully on religious matters many years before, and he had seemed to pay no attention to me. I heard that he was taken ill, and called upon him. When I had sat some time chatting with him, but without alluding to religious matters, another friend came in and asked, 'How are you to-day?' 'Why,' was his reply, 'as well as I can be with Wilberforce sitting there, and telling me that

I am going to hell.'" The conversation which had thus sunk into his mind had been affectionate and open. "I never can believe," he had said, "some parts of the Scripture." "How can you expect," was the reply, "to be able to believe, when you only turn your mind to the difficulties of the subject?" But what had made his friend read this language in his looks, was very much that sense of hopelessness which he was most desirous to correct. "At all events," said another at the close of such a conversation, "if you are right it is now too late for me to alter. I am in for it." "No," he answered earnestly, "my dear P., it is not too late, only attend to these things and you will find it true, 'him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.'"

To such calls as these he was still alive, but from all common business he withdrew as much as possible; and could not "leave the quiet of his country retirement even for the most friendly asylum, without his spirits failing him," and praying, "that in proportion as" he "grew unfit for the bustle of life," he "might become more and more harmonized with the sentiments and dispositions of a better world."[15] His need of its waters still carried him to Bath, and he paid a few short visits to his oldest and most valued friends. One of these carried him in the autumn of 1832 to his old haunts at Battersea Rise; and during his stay there Mr. Richmond took his admirable picture. This was begun whilst he was joining in general conversation, but it was found impossible to fix him in

[15] Letter to the Rev. R. I. Wilberforce.

the necessary position until an ingenious device succeeded. Mr. Forster,[16] who was staying in the house, undertook to draw him into argument. "Pray, Mr. Wilberforce," he began as he sat by him, "is it true that the last accounts from the West Indies prove that the slaves are on the whole so much better off than they were thought to be, that you have much altered your views as to slavery?" "Mr. Forster," he replied, with sudden animation, "I am astonished at you. What! a sensible man like you believe such reports? Why, sir, they flog them with a whip as thick as my arm," grasping it as he spoke. A most animated conversation followed, and Mr. Forster was not convinced until Richmond's happy likeness was secured. On this subject he was full of vigour to the very last. Soon after his return from Clapham he wrote to Mr. Buxton.

"East Farleigh, near Maidstone, Nov. 23, 1832.

"My dear Buxton,

It is well for you that just now my eyes are less equal to work than they sometimes are; nay, rather (for I would not spare my eyes when it really became my duty to strain them) it is well for you that I have but a few minutes at command; for my mind happening lately to have been led into some lucubrations on the Slave Trade, I was gradually excited into such an internal heat, that were I not to attempt to lessen the intensity of the flame by imparting a measure of it to you, I should almost become the victim

[16] The Rev. C. Forster, Chaplain to the late Bishop of Limerick.

of my own excessive inflammation. Happily, I am persuaded I need use no laborious endeavours to excite your warmth. It will be enough for me to name the governments of Spain, of Portugal, of Brazil, and above all, of France, in reference to the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Do examine all the treaties they have made with us, and the sums of money by which we endeavoured to quicken their tardiness. Then, observe, the Duc de Broglie, who is in office in France, would assuredly be favourably disposed towards any propositions we should make to his government to render practical what is now only nonfihal—a circumstance the more abominable because I understand both Spain and Portugal use the French flag to cover their acts of piracy.

"My dear friend, let me beg you, unless you happen to have recently looked into this subject, do not suppose yourself to know it; but do review your inquiry and consideration, and you will be as ready to burst into a flame as I am. I feel, and shall feel, this affair the more, because I myself am not guiltless. I myself ought to have stirred in it more than I did before I left the House of Commons, and now that I am there no longer, I consider you as my heir at law. I gave no small offence in a certain quarter for not adopting another line of succession, and I really believe if you cannot get government to concede to your wishes, you might carry the measure in the House of Commons. But my letter is called for and I must lay down my pen. There is no post to-morrow—farewell.

"May the blessing of God be with you and yours, and believe me

Ever sincerely and affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S. Pray give me a frank or two; that to Knibb to contradict a statement that I sold my slaves[17] before I took up the cause, and the other to honest Hagan the grand African Liberator.

"T. F. Buxton Esq."

"I congratulate you, my dear old friend," he wrote to Mr. Macaulay on the 1st of January, "on having entered on the year which I trust will be distinguished by your seeing at last the mortal stroke given to the accursed Slave Trade, and the emancipation of the West Indian slaves at length accomplished."

He could not be a mere well-wisher in this business. Though he had two years before "resolved never more to speak in public," he was induced, upon the 12th of April, 1833, to propose at a meeting in the town of Maidstone, a petition against slavery. His own signature was put to this petition, and with all his earlier spirit, he would not allow the appointment of delegates, a measure commonly adopted, but inconsistent he maintained with the spirit of the constitution. It was an affecting sight to see the old man who had been so long the champion of this cause

[17] One of the prevalent calumnies against Mr. Wilberforce had been that he had inherited a West Indian estate, which he had sold preparatory to his Abolition labours.

come forth once more from his retirement, and with an unquenched spirit, though with a weakened voice and failing body, maintain for the last time the cause of truth and justice.

There was now no question about immediate emancipation; but the principle of compensation was disputed, and on this his judgment and his voice were clear. Ten years before he had proposed to Mr. Canning that a fund should be formed for indemnifying those who should be proved in fact to suffer by a change in the West Indian system; but to admit the principle of previous compensation for expected injury was only to postpone for ever all improvements of the system. Against this therefore he all along contended, even whilst he maintained that Great Britain "owed smart money"[18] for her former encouragement of the Slave Trade. He hailed therefore with joy the proposal to atone for these offences by the grant of twenty millions; and in this his last speech at once declared, "I say, and say honestly and fearlessly, that the same Being who commands us to love mercy, says also, Do justice, and therefore I have no objection to grant the colonists the relief that may be due to them for any real injuries, which they may ultimately prove themselves to have sustained. But it must be after an impartial investigation of the merits of each case by a fair and competent tribunal. I have no objection either, to make every possible sacrifice which may be necessary to secure the complete accomplishment of the object

[18] Feb. 9, 1818.

which we have in view; but let not the inquiry into this matter be made a plea for perpetuating wrongs for which no pecuniary offers can compensate. "I trust," he concluded, "that we now approach the very end of our career;" and as a gleam of sunshine broke into the hall, "the object," he exclaimed with all his early fire, "is bright before us, the light of heaven beams on it, and is an earnest of success."

To the very end, this his earliest object roused him into animation, "with the interest," as Mr. Smith humorously puts it, "which a main-spring, although somewhat less elastic than when first encased, might be supposed to take in the going of a watch." When it was casually mentioned at dinner, that "at this moment probably the debate on Slavery is just commencing," he sprung up from his chair, and with his clear voice startled his surrounding friends, by suddenly exclaiming in a most striking manner, "Hear, hear, hear."

And now the time was come, when his dust was to return to the earth, and his spirit to God who gave it. On the 20th of April he left East Farleigh, and after a short visit to the Isle of Wight, arrived at Bath on the 17th of May. The waters, to which in great measure he owed the prolongation of his life till his 74th year, would help, it was hoped, to throw off the effects of the influenza, from which he had suffered greatly upon leaving Kent. But here his strength visibly declined, and it was soon seen, that if his life was spared, it would be but for a season of weakness and suffering. During two

months which he spent there, he suffered much from pain and languor; and though he displayed the most unvarying patience, yet the excellent bust executed at this time by Joseph, shows, beautiful as it is, that his outward tenement was fast hastening to decay. But while all around him were full of thought about himself, his own anxiety was altogether for two of his daughters-in-law: for a month only before his removal, two grandsons were born to inherit the name of William Wilberforce,

"Et quasi cursores vitai lampada tradunt."

This event is the last recorded in a pocket-book which he always carried with him. Other of his thoughts may be traced in its pages, by a set of references to the "closing scene of several memorable men."

All his thoughts and conversation now savoured of the better world to which he was drawing near. At this time he was consulted by a young friend who was doubtful what profession to choose, but inclined towards the army or navy. "Think particularly," he said, "whether you are choosing for time only, or for eternity. For of course a sensible man will wish to choose that which will be best on the long run. And then it is just as much part of the consideration what will be best for me between my thousandth and two thousandth year as between my twentieth and thirtieth. It is curious how our estimate of time is altered by its being removed to a distance. Ask how long did Moses live before Christ. If a man says

1300 years, and you correct him, 1500: poh! why be so accurate? Within 200 years will do. But how immense 200 years *now* seem!"

Meanwhile the calmness with which he was preparing to close his own career is apparent from the following letter.

TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD CALTHORPE.

"(Private.) Bath, June 27, 1833.

"My dear Calthorpe,

You have been very kindly liberal about franks, and I really feel your kindness, and did not mean you should be called on so largely. To confess the truth to you, as really, and not merely in name, a friend, I will state that three or four days ago I thought I was breaking up rapidly as well as seriously. There has been I think an amendment subsequently, which leads me to believe that my decline is proceeding less rapidly than I had supposed, though not less seriously. There has been a general disposition in the system to the deposition of water, and this sluggishness of the absorbents is a very common mode in which they whose constitutions are rather feeble, and who are favoured with a gradual exit, actually decay. I thought you would like to know this, and therefore would not keep it from you.

"I hear with real pleasure that your dear sister is well, and that dear Lady Charlotte is about to afford another security against the extinction of the Calthorpe name. My dear friend, may God bless and

prosper you, especially in the most important particulars. Oh what cause for thankfulness have you for having been called to the knowledge and feeling of salvation through the Redeemer! May you grow in grace more and more. Give my affectionate remembrances to Lady Charlotte, and Frederick, also to Miss Calthorpe when you next write, and be assured I am

Ever sincerely and affectionately yours,

W. WILBERFORCE.

"The cover I enclose is to spare the finances of a widow with six or seven children, and a very slender pecuniary provision. It is to introduce her to some acquaintances at the place where she has fixed for a time."

It had always been his feeling that the most fitting state for the last hours of life, was one free alike from excitement and from terror; in which while the mind was conscious of the awful nature of the approaching change, it could yet resign itself to its reconciled, all-merciful Father, with the humility as well as the confidence of a child. He often mentioned it as a proof of great wisdom, that while the younger believer is described by Bunyan in his Pilgrim's Progress as passing easily through the stream of death, a less buoyant hope and a deeper flood is represented as the portion of the aged Christian. "It is the peculiarity," he said, "of the Christian religion, that humility and holiness increase in equal proportions."

But his own mind was as remarkable for its thankfulness and peace as for its humility. His youngest son, who was with him at this period, recorded at the moment various memoranda of his state of feeling. "Saturday, July 6th, he was taken ill, quite suddenly, while sitting at dinner. I ran for a medical man, and before I returned he was got to bed. He was suffering much from giddiness and sickness, but his words to me were, 'I have been thinking of the great mercy of God in trying me with illness of this kind, which, though very distressing, is scarcely to be called pain, rather than with severe suffering, which my bodily constitution could hardly bear.' When his medical attendant came, 'Thank God,' he said, 'I am not losing my faculties.' 'Yes, but you could not easily go through a problem in arithmetic or geometry.' 'I think I could go through the Asses' Bridge,' he replied. 'Let me see;' and began, correcting himself if he omitted any thing. Of course his attendant stopped him.

"About eight o'clock, on being asked how he felt, he said, 'What cause have I for thankfulness! I have been all day almost as comfortable as if I had been pretty well. I have slept a good deal, and I have so many people who are kind to me. I am sure I feel deeply my servants' attention.'

"Alluding to a remedy which was provided for some present discomfort, he burst out repeatedly into exclamations on the goodness of God in these little things, providing means to remedy the various inconveniences of sickness. To this subject he several

times recurred, with the remark, 'How ungrateful men are in not seeing the hand of God in all their comforts! I am sure it greatly adds to our enjoyment to trace His hand in them.'

"Soon after he said, 'What is that text, 'He hath hid pride from man?' I was thinking how God had taught him the folly of pride, because the most beautiful and delicate woman, and the proudest man, of the highest birth and station, who was never approached but with deference and formality, is exposed to exactly the same infirmities of this body of our humiliation that I am.' He was repeating mentally the 51st Psalm, and asked me to look what came next after the eleventh verse, 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.' I read, 'Oh give me the comfort of Thy help again.' 'It is very odd, I thought it had been 'Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.' Do look what it is in the Bible Version.' I found it as he said. 'What a very remarkable passage! It seems like an anticipation of the privileges of the new dispensation.'

"He spoke much of the delight which he had in the affection and care of his wife and children. 'Think what I should have done had I been left; as one hears of people quarrelling and separating. 'In sickness and in health' was the burden, and well has it been kept.' (Here she came in.) 'I was just praising you.'

"Generally, I should say, that except in his remark about pride, there was hardly a word he uttered that was not a bursting forth of praise. 'What cause it

is for thankfulness,' he exclaimed, 'that I never suffer from head-ache!'

"Half-past eight, Sunday morning.[19] 'Remember, my dear H.,' he said, 'that it is Sunday morning, and all our times here are very short. I am sure the manner of my dismissal, as far as it has yet gone, has been most gracious. I have not had so much time here for reading Scripture as I wish, but I rejoice at having laid in a knowledge of it when I was stronger. I hope you always take care of that. From our familiarity with it, we do not feel about the Scripture at all as we should do, if we were to hear for the first time that there was a communication from God to man.

'Think of our Saviour coming down from heaven, and, when one feels what a *little* pain is, submitting to all that he endured; having the nails roughly driven through his hands. To be sure the thought of our Saviour's sufferings is so amazing, so astonishing, I am quite overwhelmed. Next to the horrible driving of the nails, I have thought most of His being given over to the insults of the Roman soldiery, when one thinks what brutal fellows they were. His sufferings were not alleviated as mine are by the kindness of those about Him.

'I have been thinking of that delightful text, which has often comforted me, 'Be careful for nothing,' &c.' (He went on as far as 'The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.') 'To be sure,' (he spoke with his voice faltering

[19] July 7.

with emotion,) 'it is the same Almighty power which enables Him to watch over all the world, every creature, beast, bird, or insect, and to attend to all the concerns of every individual.'

"Four o'clock. Dinner time. 'I am a poor creature to-day,' he said. 'I cannot help thinking if some of the people who saw me swaggering away on the hustings at York could see me now, how much they would think me changed. What a mercy to think that these things do not come by chance, but are the arrangements of infinite wisdom!

'When I think how many poor people are suffering, without the luxuries that I possess, and the kind friends I have about me, I am quite ashamed of my comforts.'

"Five o'clock. 'I cannot help thinking there was some mistake about my medicine; but it does not matter. There is nothing sinful in it.'

"Toussaint Louverture was mentioned in the evening. 'I sent word,' he said, 'to Sir Walter Scott that he had not at all done justice to that part of his History, (of Buonaparte,) and he replied, that if I would point any thing out to him, he would willingly alter it. I wanted dear Stephen to do it, but he did not. I am very sorry for it, but it must be known sooner or later. To be sure to make a treaty of amity and friendship with a man, and then have him and his family seized and sent on shipboard, and finally to the chateau of Joux.... And then a veil is drawn over it. None knows what happened. What a story there will be there, when this world shall give up its dead! It was

something like the case of the Duc D'Enghien, but worse.'

"Eleven, p. m. 'I feel more comfortable than I have done for I know not how long. Never had a man such cause for thankfulness as I have, and above all, that I have so many, many kind friends to do every thing for me. My own son, and my own wife. I am quite ashamed of my comforts when I think of Him who had not where to lay His head.'

"Tuesday,[20] four o'clock. Reading some of Cecil's remarks. 'Nothing can be more opposite than that spirit of the present day, which shows itself for instance in the pride of literature, to the spirit of Christianity. Compare this bold, independent, daring spirit, with the beatitudes. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed are the meek.' Nothing surely can be so contrary to what ought to be the spirit of a creature who feels in himself the seeds of corruption.

'Mrs. Hannah More told me that towards the end of Johnson's life, if he was asked how he was, he would answer, 'rather better, I thank my God through Jesus Christ.' And so to whatever he was asked.'"

A friend[21] who happened to be passing through Bath, two days afterwards, (July 11th,) paid him a visit which he thus describes. "When I arrived at the house on the South Parade which he then occupied, I found that he had been suffering severely from a bilious attack; and his lady, whose attentions to him were most tender and unremitting, appeared to

[20] July 9. [21] Joseph John Gurney.

be in low spirits on his account. Still there then appeared no reason to apprehend the near approach of death.

"I was introduced to an apartment up-stairs, where I found the veteran Christian reclining on a sofa, with his feet wrapped in flannel; and his countenance bespeaking increased age since I had last seen him, as well as much delicacy. He received me with the warmest marks of affection, and seemed to be delighted by the unexpected arrival of an old friend. I had scarcely taken my seat beside him before... it seemed given me to remind him of the words of the psalmist; 'Although ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold;' and I freely spoke to him of the good and glorious things, which, as I believed, assuredly awaited him in the kingdom of rest and peace. In the mean time the illuminated expression of his furrowed countenance, with his clasped and uplifted hands, were indicative of profound devotion and holy joy.

"Soon afterwards he unfolded his own experience to me in a highly interesting manner. He told me that the text on which he was then most prone to dwell, and from which he was deriving peculiar comfort, was a passage in the Epistle to the Philippians; 'Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.' While his frail nature

was shaking, and his mortal tabernacle seemed ready to be dissolved, this 'peace of God' was his blessed and abundant portion.

"The mention of this text immediately called forth one of his bright ideas, and led to a display, as in days of old, of his peculiar versatility of mind. 'How admirable,' said he, 'are the harmony and variety of St. Paul's smaller Epistles!—You might well have given an argument upon it in your little work on evidence. The Epistle to the Galatians contains a noble exhibition of doctrine. That to the Colossians is a union of doctrine and precept, showing their mutual connexion and dependence; that to the Ephesians, is seraphic; that to the Philippians, is all love.'[22]

'With regard to myself,' he added, 'I have nothing whatsoever to urge, but the poor Publican's plea, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' These words were expressed with peculiar feeling and emphasis, and have since called to my remembrance his own definition of the word *mercy*—'kindness to those that deserve punishment.' What a lesson may we derive from such an example! It may awfully remind us of the apostle's question—'If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear?'"

The predominance of these feelings may be seen in a remark which he made to his son a few days after-

[22] "Familiar Sketch," by Joseph John Gurney. His son has recorded the last remark as "The Epistle to the Philippians is social and domestic."

wards, speaking of his dangerous attack the week before,[23] "You must all join with me," he said, "in praying that the short remainder of my life may be spent in gaining that spirituality of mind which will fit me for heaven. And there I hope to meet all of you."

One or two other notices of his conversation before he left Bath show how thoroughly his mind retained its powers. With Mr. Joseph (who was then taking his bust) the conversation turned upon Pitt. "Michael Angelo Taylor," he said, "was one day going up St. James's Street with M. when they saw Pitt walking down it with immense strides. I do not know whether you ever happened to observe that the fall in St. James's Street makes those who are coming down it seem to overlook those who are going the other way. 'I am very sorry,' said Michael Angelo, 'but Pitt's conduct has been such, that I feel it my duty to cut him, as you will see.' Pitt walked by, giving rather a haughty nod to M., and never observing Michael Angelo at all. 'You saw I cut him.' 'I am truly glad you told me. I should have thought he cut you.'

"Never was there a man whose character was so much misunderstood. He was thought very proud. Now he was a very little proud and very shy.

"While he still condescended to practise the law, he was pleading in Chancery against the opening the biddings for an estate which had been sold by the court, and he said, 'If this is done, no sensible man

[23] July 13.

will ever bid again for an estate sold by Chancery. I am sure I never will,' a declaration which of course filled the court with merriment."

After he had spent two months at Bath, it was thought advisable that he should consult Dr. Chambers, from whose skill he had derived great benefit in 1824. He set out therefore towards London, though with no expectation on his own part of recovering. "There is no one now," he said, "that I can be useful to, but we should always be trying to follow, in every respect, God's indicated will." His purpose was to spend a few days at a house which was lent him by his cousin, Mrs. Lucy Smith, of whose kindness he readily availed himself, observing, that it was his "test of having a regard for a person when he liked to receive favours from them. One likes to confer them upon every one, but only to receive them from real friends. I am sure I used always to think, as soon as I went out of my house, which of my friends there was to whom I could lend it. It was such a pleasure to think, when I could not enjoy it myself, that they did." He commenced his journey on the 17th of July, and on the 19th arrived in Cadogan Place, Sloane Street.

Thus was he again carried along the road, which forty-five years before he had traversed in apparently a dying state, and his mind seemed to travel back through the long space which had intervened. "How differently time appears," he said to his son while they halted at an inn, "when you look at it in the life of an individual, and in the general mass!

Now I seem to have gone through such a number of various scenes, and such a lapse of time, and yet when you come to compare it with any great period of time—fifty years—think how little fifty years seems: why it is 3000 years since the Psalms, which I delight in, were written. By the way, (turning to his servant,) I have not my Psalter this morning. Do you know where it is?"

The day after he reached town, he expressed himself as "very anxious to dedicate the short remainder of time God might yet allot him, to the cultivation of union with Christ, and to the acquiring more of His spirit. My private prayers," he said, "are much the same as those in the family, pardon and grace. To-night [Saturday] particularly with regard to the week past.

"Perhaps I have been wrong in not praying more with others. But I never felt that I could open my heart with perfect freedom and sincerity, and the idea of doing otherwise in praying to Almighty God... Now I own many good men use expressions which I cannot use; for instance, about their own corruption. I HOPE no man on earth has a stronger sense of sinfulness and unworthiness before God than I. But they speak as if they did not feel the wish to do the will of God, and I am sure I cannot say that. Now S. in his prayers often uses expressions of that kind, which quite amaze me in a man so sincere as he is."

When he reached London parliament was still sitting, and many of his friends flocked around him. "What cause, it is for thankfulness," he said, "that

God has always disposed people to treat me so kindly, and with such attention! Popularity is certainly a dangerous thing;"—[then after a pause;] —"the antidote is chiefly in the feeling one has; how very differently they would regard me, if they knew me really!" A friend who at this time came in asked, "Well! how are you?" "I am like a clock which is almost run down." On the Monday after his arrival, he received a visit from a party of children. After they were gone, he said, "What a delightful thing it is to think how many inhabitants are being trained up there for heaven! For when the means of grace are used, one does see, I think, that God so very greatly, one may say universally, blesses them."

His public conduct had not prevented him from keeping up a friendly connexion with many West Indians; who gave full credit to his sincerity. One of his last visitors was a member of a great West Indian family; and to his son's remark that this circumstance produced no effect upon his feelings—"Oh when we really believe a man to be serving God," he answered, "I delight in trampling on all these little points. Some one said, 'I trample on impossibilities.' I do not quite say that; but all these little distinctions are overwhelmed, annihilated, in the case of a person with whom I trust, (speaking with deep seriousness,) for my own sake, I may meet hereafter."

"How thankful should I be," was his remark to a friend who now came in, "that I am not lying in

severe pain, as so many are! Certainly, not to be able to move about is a great privation to me; but then I have so many comforts, and above all, such kind friends—and to that you contribute."

"At this time," says another member of his family, "I arrived in London to see him, and was much struck by the signs of his approaching end. His usual activity was totally suspended by a painful local disorder, which prevented him from walking. The morning of Friday (July 26th) was pleasant, and I assisted before his breakfast to carry him in a chair to the steps in front of the house, that he might enjoy the air for a few moments. Here he presented a most striking appearance, looking forth with calm delight upon trees and grass, the freshness and vigour of which contrasted with his own decay. It was nearly his last view of God's works in this their lower manifestation. 'The doors' were soon to 'be shut in the streets, and those that look out of the windows to be darkened.'

"His manner at this time was more than usually affectionate, and he received with great cheerfulness the visits of many old associates, from whom he had long been separated. The last words which I heard from him related to one of these, whose religious opinions he had for many years lamented. 'How truly amiable he is, yet I can never see him without the deepest pain!' On Friday afternoon I left him with the intention of preparing to receive him, on the following Tuesday, not knowing that

before that time he was to be a 'partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.' "

It was altogether a striking combination of circumstances that he should have come to London at that time—to die. The Bill for the Abolition of Slavery was read for the second time in the House of Commons on the Friday night, and the last public information he received was, that his country was willing to redeem itself from the national disgrace at any sacrifice. "Thank God," said he, "that I should have lived to witness a day in which England is willing to give twenty millions sterling for the Abolition of Slavery." His state of health had latterly induced many of his friends to express their hope that he might be allowed to witness the consummation of the fifty years' struggle, and might then retire in peace; and so strong was this presentiment, that one of them speaks of writing to take leave of him so soon as the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery was known to be in progress. That this anticipation should be so exactly realized, added signal interest to an event, which in the course of nature might be shortly expected.

Not less remarkable was it that London, which of late he had seldom visited, and where he purposed to remain but a day or two, should be the place of his departure. Yet had it been otherwise, his funeral could hardly have presented the circumstances, which made it the fit termination of such a life. The concurrence of two such incidents seemed providentially designed

to fix public attention on his closing scene, that so the aged Christian might be marked out by the public voice, as the man whom his country "delighted to honour."

On the evening of Friday, however, he seemed so much better, that there was every reason to suppose he would be able to leave town on the Tuesday. His youngest son has again recorded some of his remarks. "A review in the Quarterly was read to him, (Rush's Residence,) which spoke of the Duke of Wellington's ability in council. 'Most true,' he said. 'I suppose you have never seen them, but when the Duke of Wellington commanded in Spain, and his brother the Marquis Wellesley was sent to conduct the negociation, the papers containing the despatches of the two brothers were printed by parliament, and I remember thinking, that I had never seen any thing at all equal to them in talent. I remember hearing too, that of all the persons who gave evidence about Finance, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Harrowby knew most of the subject.'

"Some of his concluding remarks this evening were on the number of friends by whom he was surrounded. 'I do declare,' he said, 'that the delight I have in feeling that there are a few people whose hearts are really attached to me, is the very highest I have in this world. And as far as the present state is concerned, what more could any man wish at the close of life, than to be attended by his own children, and his own wife, and all treating him with such uniform kindness and affection?'"

His son concludes his notes this evening. "On the whole what appears to me characteristic in his state of mind is chiefly this: there seems to be little anticipation, though he is strongly impressed with a feeling that he is near his end; much nearer than from what his physician says I trust is the case. He speaks very little as if looking forward to future happiness; but he seems more like a person in the actual enjoyment of heaven within: he hardly speaks of any one subject except to express his sense of thankfulness, and what cause he feels for gratitude. This is the case even in speaking of the things which try him most. Thus talking of his being kept from exercise, 'What cause for thankfulness have I that I am not lying in pain, and in a suffering posture, as so many people are! Certainly it is a great privation to me from my habits not to be able to walk about, and to lie still so much as I do, but then how many there are who are lying in severe pain!' And then he will break out into some passionate expression of thankfulness."

"The next morning[24] his amendment seemed to continue. To an old servant who drew him out in a wheel-chair, he talked with more than usual animation, and the fervency with which he offered up the family prayer was particularly noticed. But in the evening his weakness returned in a most distressing manner, and the next day he experienced a succession of fainting fits, to which he had been for two years subject, which were followed by much suffering, and which for a time suspended his powers of recollection.

[24] July 27.

His physician pronounced that if he survived this attack it would be to suffer much pain, and probably also with an impaired understanding. During an interval in the evening of Sunday, 'I am in a very distressed state,' he said, alluding apparently to his bodily condition. 'Yes,' it was answered, 'but you have your feet on the Rock.' 'I do not venture,' he replied, 'to speak so positively; but I hope I have.' And after this expression of his humble trust, with but one groan, he entered into that world where pain and doubt are for ever at an end. He died at three o'clock in the morning of Monday, July 29th, aged 73 years and 11 months."

No sooner was his death made known, than the following letter, originating with the Lord Chancellor, (Brougham,) was addressed to his youngest son, the only one of his four children who was with him at the time of his departure.

TO THE REV. H. W. WILBERFORCE.[25]

"We the undersigned members of both Houses of parliament, being anxious upon public grounds to show our respect for the memory of the late William Wilberforce, and being also satisfied that public honours can never be more fitly bestowed than upon such benefactors of mankind, earnestly request that he may be buried in Westminster Abbey; and that we, and others who may agree with us in

[25] His youngest son, though thus addressed in the requisition, was not at that time in Holy Orders.

these sentiments, may have permission to attend his funeral.

William Frederick	J. Lincoln
Brougham, C.	E. Chichester
Eldon	Bristol
Lansdown, P. C.	Gosford
Vassall Holland	Harrowby
Westminster	Albemarle
Clarendon	C. J. London
Essex	Godolphin
Clifden	Rosslyn
Wellesley	Calthorpe
Grey	Bute
Bexley	Denbigh
Sidmouth	Ducie
Grafton	Caledon
W. Cantuar.	Clanricarde
Wellington	Morley
Ripon, P. S.	Edward Hereford
Haddington	Dacre.
Plunket	

In conveying this requisition,[26] the Lord Chancellor declared himself "authorized to add that nearly all the members of both Houses of parliament would have joined, had the time allowed;" and an application couched in the same terms was signed by almost one hundred members of all parties in the House of Commons.

[26] July 31.

Mr. Wilberforce had chosen for the place of his interment, in accordance with a promise made to his brother-in-law, Mr. Stephen, a vault at Stoke Newington, where his sister and his daughter had been buried. A direction to this effect was given in his will, a circumstance however not actually ascertained till after the funeral. But his family had no hesitation in acceding to a request so gratifying to their feelings. Still they thought it fitting to avoid all such parade as was inconsistent with the situation of a private gentleman. It was his characteristic distinction that, without quitting the rank in which Providence had placed him, he had cast on it a lustre peculiarly his own. Nothing therefore could be more appropriate, than that the Bishops of the Church, the Princes of the Blood, the great warrior of the age, the King's chief servants, and the highest legal functionaries—whatever England had most renowned for talent and greatness—should assemble as they did around his unpretending bier. His simple name was its noblest decoration.

When his funeral reached Westminster Abbey on Saturday, Aug. 5th, the procession was joined by the members then attending the two Houses of parliament. Public business was suspended; the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Lord Chancellor, one Prince of the Blood, with others of the highest rank, took their place as pall-bearers beside the bier. It was followed by his sons, his relations, and immediate friends. The Prebendary then in residence, one of his few surviving college friends, met it at the

Minster gate with the Church's funeral office; and whilst the vaulted roof gave back the anthem his body was laid in the north transept, close to the tombs of Pitt, Fox, and Canning.

It was remarked by one of the prelates who took part in this striking scene, that considering how long he had retired from active life, and that his intellectual superiority could be known only by tradition to the generation which thus celebrated his obsequies, there was a sort of testimony to the moral sublimity of his Christian character in this unequalled mark of public approbation. For while a public funeral had been matter of customary compliment to those who died in official situations, this voluntary tribute of individual respect from the mass of the great legislative bodies of the land, was an unprecedented honour. It was one moreover to which the general voice responded. The crowd of equipages which followed his funeral procession was unusually great. The Abbey was thronged with the most respectable persons. "You will like to know," writes a friend, "that as I came towards it down the Strand, every third person I met going about their ordinary business was in mourning." A subscription was immediately opened among his friends in London; it was agreed to place his statue in Westminster Abbey, and as a yet more appropriate memorial, that some charitable endowment should perpetuate his name. Public meetings were held at York and Hull on the occasion, and in the former place, a County Asylum for the blind has since been founded in honour of him,

while his townsmen of Hull have raised a column to his memory.

It would be vain to mention all the marks of respect which were paid to him by the public societies in which he had borne part. Nor were there wanting other more private, but not less affecting, tokens of regard. A number of those who had been indebted to his kindness met after his funeral, "with feelings," as one of them expressed it in touching, and it is hoped not unseemly, words, "almost as disconsolate as those of the bereaved apostles, to lament his loss." "Great part of our coloured population, who form here an important body," writes a dignified clergyman from the West Indies, "went into mourning at the news of his death." The same honour was paid him by this class of persons at New York, where also an eulogium (since printed) was pronounced upon him by a person publicly selected for the task, and their brethren throughout the United States were called upon to pay the marks of external respect to the memory of their benefactor. For departed kings there are appointed honours, and the wealthy have their gorgeous obsequies: it was his nobler portion to clothe a people with spontaneous mourning, and go down to the grave amid the benedictions of the poor.

It is impossible to conclude this history without observing the striking testimony which it bears to that inspired dictate; "Godliness has the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come." If ever any man drew a prosperous lot in this life, he did

so, who has been here described. Yet his Christian faith was from first to last his talisman of happiness. Without it the buoyancy of his youthful spirits led to a frivolous waste of life, not more culpable than unsatisfying. With it came lofty conceptions,—an energy which triumphed over sickness and languor, the coldness of friends and the violence of enemies,—a calmness not to be provoked,—a perseverance which repulse could not baffle. To these virtues was owing the happiness of his active days. Through the power of the same sustaining principle, his affection towards his fellow creatures was not dulled by the intercourse of life, nor his sweetness of temper impaired by the irritability of age. A firm trust in God, an undeviating submission to His will, an overflowing thankfulness,—these maintained in him to the last that cheerfulness which this world could neither give nor take away. They poured even upon his earthly pilgrimage the anticipated radiance of that brighter region, to which he has now doubtless been admitted. For "THE PATH OF THE JUST IS LIKE THE SHINING LIGHT, WHICH SHINETH MORE AND MORE UNTO THE PERFECT DAY."

THE END.

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1768. Transferred, on the death of his father, to the care of his uncle at Wimbledon, i. 4. his early acquaintance with Scripture, and habits of devotion, 6.
1771. Removed, by his mother, from the care of his uncle, to Hull, i. 7. enters into the gaieties and amusements of that town, 8. placed under the care of the Rev. K. Basket, 9. his talents for general society, and skill in singing, 9.
1773. His early abomination of the Slave Trade, i. 9. and taste for literature, 9.
1776. Entered at St. John's College, Cambridge, i. 10. exposed to new temptations, 10. picture of his college life by the Rev. T. Gisborne, 10. by himself, 10. and by Lord Clarendon, 12. refuses to subscribe to the Articles of the Church, 12.
1780. Resolves to enter upon public life, i. 13. canvasses the town of Hull, 13. repairs to London to secure the non-resident freemen, 14. frequents the gallery of the House of Commons, 14. forms an intimacy with Mr. Pitt, 14. his coming of age celebrated, 15. returned for Hull, 15. comes to London, 16. elected a member of the leading clubs, 16. immersed in politics and fashion, 16. gambling transactions, 17. gains at Faro, 18. cured of gambling, 19. his close attention to parliamentary duties, 19.
1781. Makes his first speech in the House of Commons, i. 20. passion for the beauties of scenery and retirement, 22. residence at Rayrigg, on the banks of Windermere, 23.
1782. Opposes Lord North's administration, i. 23. supports the Shelburne ministry on the accession of Mr. Pitt thereto, 24. passes the Easter holidays with Pitt at Bath, 24. takes up his residence at Wimbledon, 25. seconds the Address to the King, on opening the session, 26.

1783. Passes his time between London and Wimbledon, i. 28. consequences of his rare accomplishment in singing, 29; and powers of imitation, 29. cured by Lord Camden of the art of mimicry, 30. his dangers from the temptation of ambition, 30. excursions to Yorkshire and Dorsetshire, 34. field sports, 34. foreign tour with Pitt and Eliot, 34. Rheims, 35. Paris, 39. Fontainbleau, 40. return to England, 42. state of parties, 45.

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1785. Returns to England to support Parliamentary Reform, i. 77. lives in a round of company and amusement, 79. returns to the continent with Isaac Milner, 80. religious discussions with Milner, 87. favourable results, 88. returns to England another man in his inner being, 89. commences a private Journal, 89. begins constant family prayer, 91. opens to his friends the change which had passed upon him, 93. writes to, and calls upon, the Rev. John Newton, 97. studies the Scriptures daily, 102. takes lodgings in the Adelphi to be near pastoral instructions, 103. withdraws his name from the clubs, 103.

1786. Visits the Unwins at Stock, i. 110. returns an altered man to his parliamentary duties, 113. proposes his plan for purifying county elections, 113. introduces his Surgical Subjects Bill, 114. gives up his villa at Wimbledon, 115. plans for the improvement of time, 116. intercourse with his family and friends, 118. visit to Bath, 127.

1787. Returns to London, i. 129. parliamentary duties, 129. speeches on the treaties with France and Portugal, and on Hastings' impeachment, 129. efforts for the reformation of manners, and revival of religion, 129. obtains a Royal Proclamation against vice and immorality, 132. establishes the Society for the Reformation of Manners, 130. travels round the country to insure the success of his plan, 135. retirement at Bath, 139. devotes himself to the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 140. resolves to bring the subject before the House of Commons, 151. returns to London, 154. purposed journey to Paris on Abolition, 155.

1788. Established in Palace Yard for the season, i. 158. gives notice of a motion on Abolition, 160. dangerous illness, 167. compelled to postpone his motion, 169. journey to Bath, 169. restored to health by a proper use of opium, 173. visit to Cambridge, 175; and Westmoreland, 177. return to London, 190. death of his aunt, 193.

1789. New year, commences a time-account, i. 194. serious rules for self-improvement, 196. prepares to move for the Abolition, 214. brings the question before the House, 218. projects a journey to Paris to further the cause, 228. visits Hannah More, 236. visit to Cheddar—assists in the establishment of schools there, 240. birth-day resolutions, 240. visits Buxton,

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1791. Occupied in preparing Slave evidence, i. 287. moves the Abolition question, 298. visit to Bath, 301. and to Burton Pynsent, 304. return to London, 306. engaged in the establishment of the Sierra Leone Company, 307. visits to Rothley Temple, and Yoxall Lodge, 311. extensive correspondence, 313. plans and resolutions of improvement, 316. return to London, 324.
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